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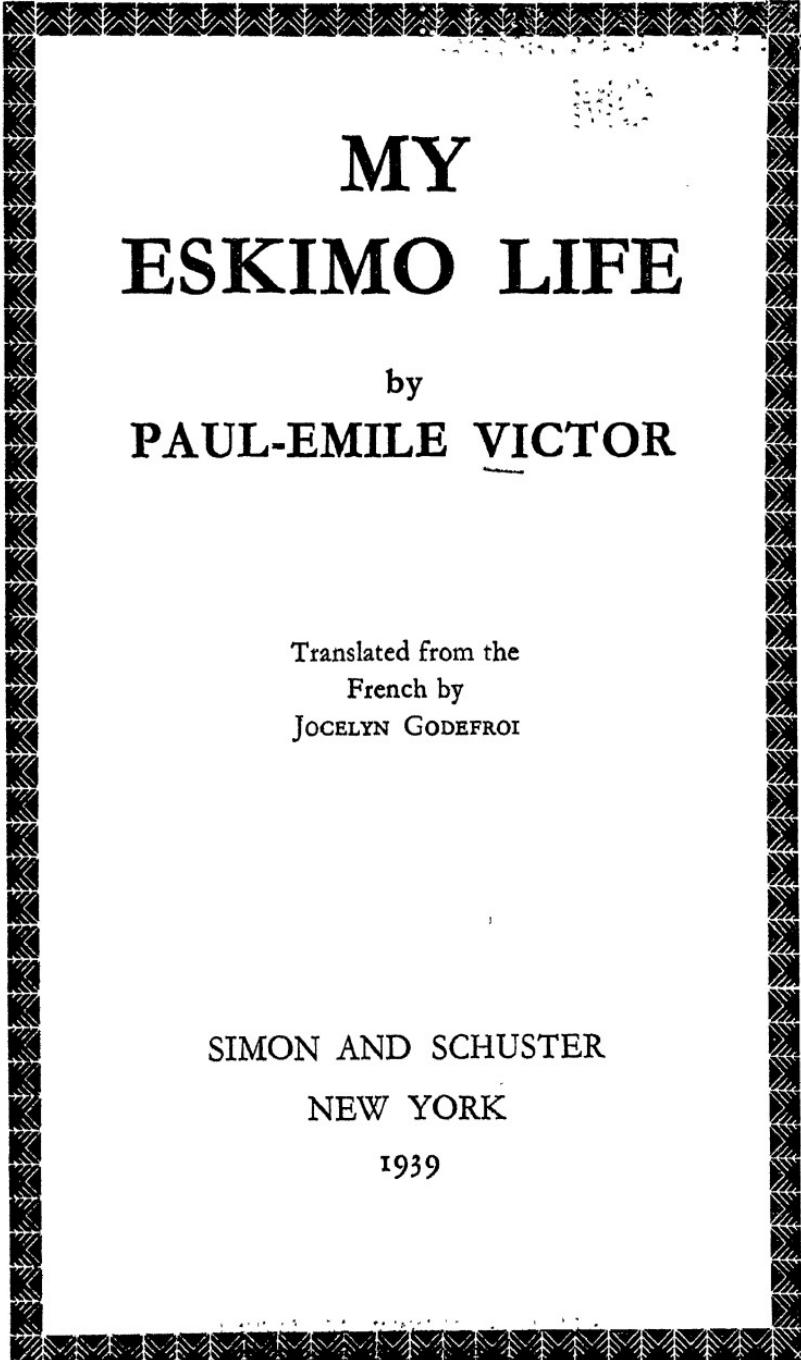
# MY ESKIMO LIFE







PAUL-EMILE VICTOR



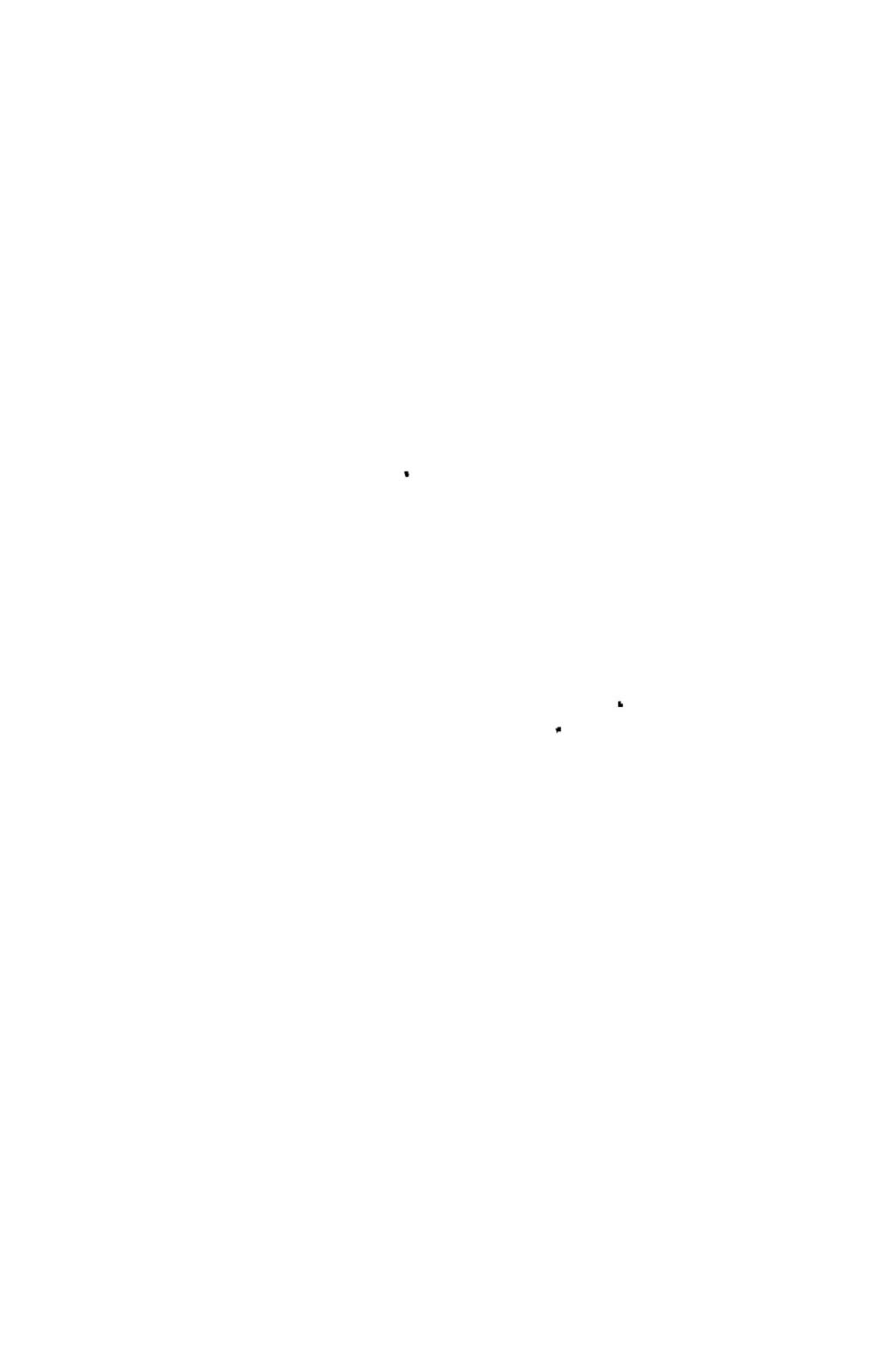
MY  
ESKIMO LIFE

by  
PAUL-EMILE VICTOR

Translated from the  
French by  
JOCELYN GODEFROI

SIMON AND SCHUSTER  
NEW YORK

1939



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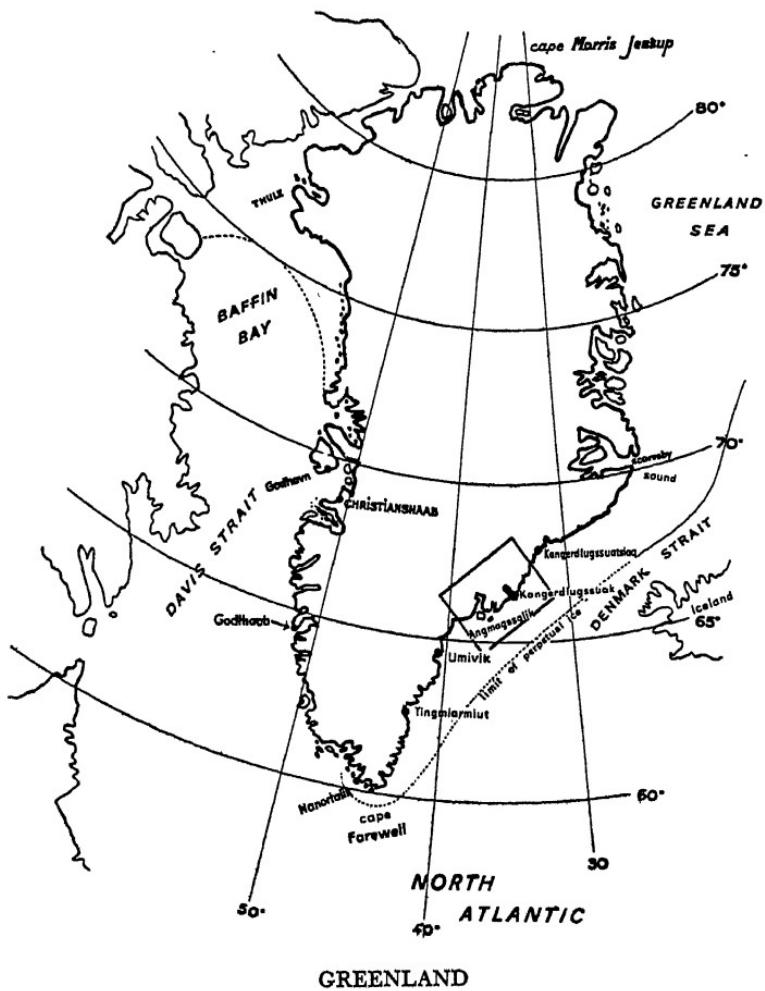
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## CHAPTER ZERO

### WHICH SHALL SERVE AS A PREFACE

*January 1934.*

This was Charcot's reply to my application for a passage on board the *Pourquoi Pas?* for her summer cruise:

DEAR SIR,

You could have found no better recommendation than one from my dear old comrade Kergomard.

It would be inadvisable at the moment to give you a definite reply, as the next cruise of the *Pourquoi Pas?* is not yet settled, and I have the programme only very vaguely sketched out in my head.

However, I am considering the possibility of your eventual collaboration, and it would give me great pleasure to talk the matter over with you.

Yours most sincerely,  
DR. CHARCOT.

*February 1934.*

I had read all that had been published regarding the Eskimo of the East coast of Greenland: a rapid sketch was made by the Danish Lieutenant Gustav Holm, who discovered them in 1884; another one by the Danish Lieutenant Amdrup, who set up at Angmagssalik the first houses to appear at the Danish station there. In 1906 the Danish linguist W. Thalbitzer spent a winter amongst them and brought back a technical and scientific study of their language, their legends, and their songs. In his work (*Meddelelser om Grönland*) he gives a description of the ethnographical objects from Angmagssalik which

are to be seen at the Copenhagen Museum. But much still remained to be studied in this vast ethnographical field.

I had seen the collections which we have at the Museum of Ethnography at the Trocadéro in Paris; but they were negligible, containing only two or three objects which had come from Angmagssalik.

I had visited people more fortunate than myself – young men who had already sailed with Charcot – and had been told that the *Pourquoi Pas?* generally touched at Scoresby Sound (where there are barely a hundred Eskimo), only, and rarely stayed there for more than two or three days.

There was good work to be done, but these circumstances made it impossible.

There was a sentence which, almost imperceptibly at first, surged up in my mind in an irresistible crescendo. Wherever I went, I could hear nothing else; in the street, at home, and during my sleep which was now scanty and broken.

A year. . . . I must stay a year. . . .

This was all very well, but the means had yet to be devised: and my thoughts flew to Charcot.

He received me in a room at the Marine Academy.

'I had your letter, my boy. What else is there?'

'Chief, I ventured to write to you the first time to ask you to take me on board for the summer cruise. Now there is something else I want.'

'Tell me.'

He was standing up, leaning his back against a door richly adorned with mouldings. Around us various old gentlemen were coming in, going out, talking, discussing.

'Well, chief, this is what it is. At the Museum of Ethnography at the Trocadéro there is no collection of Eskimo objects from Angmagssalik. Moreover, there is a great deal of study to be undertaken on the spot from the ethnographical and anthropological points of view. So there it is. Chief, I am going to ask you straight out to take me to Angmagssalik and leave me there for a year,

to bring back collections for the museums and to study the ethnography of the inhabitants.'

'To Angmagssalik?'

'Yes, chief!'

'But you know, my boy, that I only go to Scoresby Sound?'

'Yes, chief.'

Without moving, he looked up and gazed steadily at me. My throat was dry. Around us the old gentlemen were still talking, discussing, coming in, going out. But so far as I was concerned, none existed but this good-natured soul, with his tall, slightly stooping figure, his expression radiating energy, his kindly eyes. In those eyes I saw the ghost of a smile. I tried to swallow a little saliva but failed. His lips moved, and without taking his eyes from my face, he said:

'That's settled then, my boy. I will take you to Angmagssalik.'



# MY ESKIMO LIFE

## CHAPTER I

### NO CHANGES

*Kangerdlugssuatsiaq*,<sup>1</sup>

*Monday, 10th August, 1936.*

Franco reaches Spain with 4,000 troops.

Military dictatorship in Greece.

Olympic games in Germany.

Death of Louis Blériot

(The newspapers)<sup>2</sup>

7 p.m.—On board the *Pourquoi Pas?*

The evening was foggy, and the coast, a mere hundred yards distant, looked as though it were shrouded by a curtain of tulle—like a badly-taken photograph.

The deck of the *Pourquoi Pas?* was damp and slippery. In the wardroom, the small electric lamp from the *Vierge*

<sup>1</sup> See Maps at the end of the volume for the names of places mentioned.

<sup>2</sup> These Press extracts were added in December 1937. I did not get full news of all events until my return in October 1937. The year which I spent amongst my twenty-five Eskimo friends was one in which I had the happiness of freedom from all contact with the outside world, and which I lived through without a wireless set. I am often asked why I did not have wireless: *I did not want to have it*, and I hope that my feeling in the matter will become clear to the reader.

*Note.* If the reader prefers not to interrupt the 'escapist' impression which the book may convey, he is advised to omit these newspaper extracts, which are printed in characters small enough to be unobtrusive.

des Flots' was burning, in accordance with the usual custom when the weather was overcast.

I knocked at the 'Pacha's' door.

'Come in.'

Charcot was seated at his desk, writing, as his custom was, on large sheets of paper.

'Chief, I have come to say good-bye to you, and to thank you again for all you have done for me.'

Charcot rose, came over to where I stood, and took my hand in both of his.

'No need to thank me, my boy,' he said. 'I have done my best to help you. And you know that I'm fond of you. . . .'

He remained silent for a moment, and then added, almost under his breath:

'Good-bye, my boy, and good luck. . . .'

We looked at each other, both labouring under a stress of emotion. And I saw his eyes suddenly fill with tears. . . .



Tuesday, 11th August, 1936.

4 o'clock in the morning. Ashore. Siren. I woke with a start, to find that the inside of the tent was covered with tiny crystals of white hoar-frost. Then came a fresh blast of the siren, its sound now muffled and distant; and through the tent opening the *Pourquoi Pas?* came into my

line of vision, skirting the shore and making for the exit of the fjord.

The weather was wretched.

Hurriedly I took the French flag which I had got out yesterday, and ran with bare feet to the extremity of the little headland which the *Pourquoi Pas?* must pass.

Odarpi<sup>1</sup> came up behind me, scratching himself.

'So the big boat is starting off?' he said.

With outstretched arm I waved the flag, and saw the *Pourquoi Pas?*'s flag dip three times to bid me farewell. Then I heard the final blast of the siren; and shortly afterwards, down came a thick curtain of fog.

I felt as though I had been seeing off a friend at the station.

### *A recollection*

Three years ago, on the 25th August, 1934, at the extremity of a headland at the entrance of the narrow channel leading to Tasissaq,<sup>2</sup> all four of us were standing: Robert, Micha, Fredy, and I. From the top of the hill we overlooked the *Pourquoi Pas?*, whose deck we could see, crowded with people.

'Now then. Hip, hip, hurrah!'

Three times the sound of our voices, thin and feeble, faded away and was lost at a few yards' distance, stifled by the mountains, the ice, the sea and the air.

Almost immediately, the ship seemed to come to life; every arm was raised, and every man of the crew, all our colleagues on the scientific staff, and the Pacha himself whom we could make out quite clearly, answered us with a resounding Hurrah, so overwhelming that it filled our consciousness. . . .

We were dumbfounded.

<sup>1</sup> For the names of the characters in this book and their various relationships, see Appendix, p. 337.

<sup>2</sup> For all place-names see Maps at the end of the volume.

And when the *Pourquoi Pas?* had shrunk to a mere dot surrounded by ice, we looked at each other, with no thought but of ourselves. Were we not heroes?<sup>1</sup>

Odarpi set up his tent, and we all proceeded to take up our quarters there. Whilst he, with his wife Tigayet, was putting the skeleton together, Ogui, Doumidia, Yosepi<sup>2</sup> and I carried the sealskins which were to make its covering.

They were heavy – and they had an unpleasing smell. When, with a jerk of my shoulder, I threw down my load on the site of the tent, my fingers still retained a portion of skin – which was full of maggots.

Everyone laughed.

'Soon you'll have stopped being a Kratouna,'<sup>3</sup> Kara said to me, after depositing some saliva on the quid of tobacco<sup>4</sup> which was projecting from her large pipe.

*Wednesday, 12th August, 1936.*

In the large packing-case labelled 'provisions, articles for personal use' I found everything. I knew that I should. No sooner had I removed the lid than the scent of my mother's cupboards, mingled with a faint suggestion of the odour of the paternal factory, arose from within: the

<sup>1</sup> See the preliminary report of the French Expedition to the East coast of Greenland, 1934–5, Appendix, p. 326.

<sup>2</sup> See the table of characters at the end of the volume. The Eskimo of Angmagssalik are semi-nomads. During the summer period (June to September), they live in tents. In winter, they live in huts made of stones and earth. They abandon their huts for tents as early as possible in the season, even when the fjords are still covered with ice and the earth with snow.

<sup>3</sup> Kratouna – white man.

<sup>4</sup> Gustav Holm, a Dane, discovered the Eskimo of Angmagssalik in 1884. He arrived in their district with two Eskimo boats (*oumiaks*) and Eskimo crews from the west coast of Greenland (colonised by the Danes for some centuries past). These Eskimo had reserves of tobacco which they distributed. In 1895, when the first large Danish boat arrived to set up the station, a large number of the Eskimo of Angmagssalik were on the point of undertaking an extremely long journey to the West coast, following the coast-line, to replenish their stores of tobacco, for which they had acquired a taste ten years earlier. In order to keep them in their own district the Danes were obliged to procure tobacco for them. Per contra, all unnecessary or harmful products are prohibited, alcohol, and even coffee.

odour of pine-wood, the odour of naphthaline, the odour of lavender. Packing paper I saw, carefully folded: and cardboard boxes tied up with string, with a list of the contents on each.

Ten gingerbread cakes, twenty pots of honey. Coffee-pot. Toothpaste. Shaving soap. Nail-file. Pipes. Cigarettes.

### *A recollection*

Three years ago, in August 1934, the *Pourquoi Pas?* has just unloaded our 20 tons of material on the seashore. Surrounding us are Eskimo whom we are now seeing for the first time, who speak an unknown language, who, for all we know, may be suspicious and unfriendly, and are now watching us with merry little eyes. We have 20 tons of material which have to be taken up to our combined house and base camp.

We get the cases up by means of carriers. The Eskimo watch us with their hands in their pockets. Twenty tons of stores – a big expedition. . . .

10.30 p.m. I was writing by the light of a candle set on a packing-case to my left. Leaning against my rolled-up sleeping-bag I could just make out Doumidia in the semi-darkness, next to me, and looking at me with a serious expression on her face:

'You don't seem to think how lovely it is that we are here together again, you and I,' she said, without smiling.

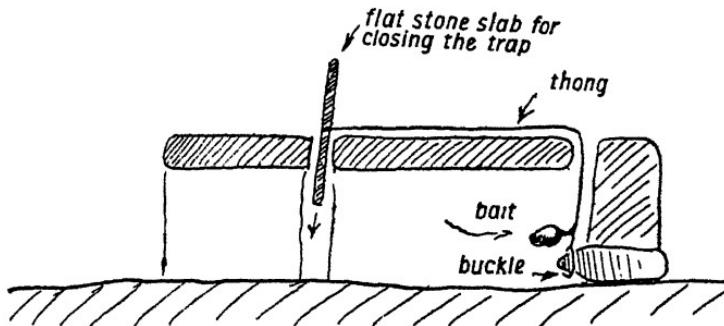
Near the tent opening, her mother, old Kara, was seated with a kerchief of many colours around her pikiwa.<sup>1</sup> Her earrings, which were adorned at the ends with large white buttons, stood out in clear relief against the dark bronze of her face.

Outside, my twenty dogs were howling at the moon, which was now rising.

<sup>1</sup> A chignon arranged on the top of the head. See the glossary, Appendix, p. 347.

*Friday, 14th August, 1936.*

I tried to shoot partridges<sup>1</sup> in the valley of the lakes, but there were no birds to be seen. I climbed up along the edge of a mountain torrent which roared and boomed on its downward course, amidst a confused mass of huge rocks split by the frost. I bathed with Yosepi in this water, which had a temperature of less than 50°. Seeing me swim, my dogs uttered little cries, but could not summon up sufficient courage to join me.



I got dry in the open air, and then returned over the ridges. There were snares for foxes<sup>2</sup> in a state of dilapidation: and flowers, herbs, and moss.

Then came lunch, which consisted of a boiled moorhen, and bilberries<sup>3</sup> with sweetened milk.

<sup>1</sup> These are actually ptarmigan. The various species of birds to be found on the East coast of Greenland in summer are very numerous, and include ptarmigan, water-hens, ducks, wild geese of all kinds, storm-petrel, sea-gulls, etc.

<sup>2</sup> The animals most frequently hunted in Angmagssalik are seals, white bears, blue or white foxes, and narwhals. Walrus are rare, whilst whales have almost entirely disappeared. As regards reindeer, the last one was killed in about 1895, and they are now extinct on the East coast of Greenland.

<sup>3</sup> Bilberries with a bitter taste. The vegetation of Angmagssalik is very scanty: patches of grass, which is never green, and a few climbing plants. But the species are varied and provide vegetable food - bilberries, dandelions, sorrel, seaweed, etc.

*Saturday, 15th August, 1936.*  
Alone on board the *Ariel*, Marin-Marie crosses the Atlantic in 18 days, 16 hours.

Attempt at encirclement of Madrid.

Genin is lost on the air route France to South America.

(Extracts from newspapers added in December 1937)

*7 o'clock in the morning (perhaps).* I didn't know the time and I didn't care. On the Inlandsis, our high-grade watches<sup>1</sup> enabled me to set the hands as required. Here, what was the use? My watch had stopped, as it usually did, at five minutes past six.

I had just awakened in the hot tent on which the sun's rays were falling. The dogs were galloping around it and I heard them at play. At my side, in her sleeping-bag, Doumidia was asleep, smiling like a little girl, her head resting on one of her arms and her hair scattered over her brown shoulders.

*Sunday, 16th August, 1936.*  
The Parisians depart on holiday.

A woman attends an execution in the United States.

(Extract from newspapers added in December 1937)

*Sunday. . . .*

Everyone was putting on his best clothes.

<sup>1</sup> Chronometers which we carried in a special pocket, almost next to the skin, in our under-trousers of chamois skin (to keep them at as even a temperature as possible and thus prevent variations). These chronometers were necessary for the calculation of longitude. Latitude was calculated by the position of the sun taken with sextant or theodolite.

The interior of Greenland is, in fact, a tableland of desert ice, where one must 'navigate' as at sea. See the preliminary Report of the French Trans-Greenland Expedition, 1936, for an account of the crossing. Appendix, p. 321.

Kara had on a quite perfect pikiwa; the day before, in my tent, her hair had been all over her face. She was wearing her 'new' kamiks.<sup>1</sup>

Less than a fortnight previously Doumidia had come to show me her beautiful black kamiks reaching above the knee, and embroidered with decorative designs like stained-glass windows.

'I prefer black kamiks,' she said to me now, in a tone of voice into which she tried to instil a note of indifference. 'Don't you think they are prettier than the red ones?'

And I agreed with her.

To-day it was Kara who was wearing them. They were unrecognisable, crumpled and discoloured, with large white stains; and the beautiful embroidery like stained-glass windows was no longer visible.

Doumidia was wearing her red dress with white flower pattern which I gave her last year, and which was now torn at the bottom. Over it she wore a pullover with red and white stripes; and her attire was completed with short white kamiks with embroidery, which she had bought 'almost' new for five kroners<sup>2</sup> from Pekritsek, at Isortoq, because, as she explained:

'I am sorry for her, poor dear, her husband is dead.'

As soon as I had shaved I rejoined the others.

Tipou, Tada, and Ogui<sup>3</sup> were washing in a small pool of water. Ogui's neck was still quite black, and the condition of his ears had better not be described. I removed his filthy shirt, black with dirt, turned up my sleeves, and washed him with plentiful supplies of soap and water. His little brown body, bent forward, took it all without flinch-

<sup>1</sup> Sealskin boots, including an interior and exterior boot; they can be made with skins with the hair untouched, or plucked off, white or coloured. The women procure them from the Danish trading centre.

<sup>2</sup> The currency introduced by the Danes as a basis of exchange at the trading centre consists of special counters bearing a nominal value corresponding to kroners (crowns) and the Danish øre.

<sup>3</sup> See the list of names of characters and their degrees of relationship, Appendix, p. 337.

ing, despite the cold wind and the ice-cold water of the little pool.

Tipou and Tada were carrying on with redoubled energy. But in their case the technique of washing did not extend to their ears, which remained dirty.

Outside her sealskin tent Tigayet was engaged in softening the kamiks belonging to her husband, Odarpi. She was wearing a mauve dress on which, by way of a belt, she had sewn, just below the hips, a superb green ribbon.

Everything was ready in the tent, with the whole company assembled. A touch of solemnity appeared on every face. On the platform at the end were the women and children, whilst on a packing-case at the side of it Odarpi was seated, wearing a white jacket. On the other side were Yosepi and I.

Odarpi cleared his throat and spat. Then, placing his thumb alternately against each nostril, he leaned forward and blew his nose violently.

Silence. . . .

Slowly he opened the book which he was holding,<sup>1</sup> paused a moment, and said:

'Now we shall all pray.'

Odarpi raised his eyebrows, and his mouth drooped. He then began to read prayers, struggling to maintain a good pronunciation.

Every head was bent. On the platform shadowy figures of women were outlined, bending forward, and seen by the light which fell upon the transparent skins of which the tent was composed. On the bars suspended horizontally above the oil lamps, seals' intestines, suffused with blood, were drying. On the floor there were gnawed bones; in the chamber pots, raw bear's meat.

<sup>1</sup> A prayer-book in the Eskimo language of the East coast, which differs as much from that of the West as Italian from French.

The Eskimo of the West coast were discovered and converted to Christianity several centuries ago.

Those of the East coast, discovered in 1884, became Christians barely thirty years ago.

'Tre hundert fem og halfierce,'<sup>1</sup> was heard after the Amen following the first prayer; and the number of the psalm which we were about to sing was given out. Every book was open at the right place except Kara's; she could not read, but continued to turn over the pages as though she were able to do so.

'Give it to me,' Odarpi said, taking the book and opening it for her at the right page.

Tekri, singing very loudly, guided his finger along the lines to follow them. He too made a great effort to copy the pronunciation of the West coast, and the 'tl's had an almost triumphant sound. At times he even did a little fabrication to heighten the effect. Wherever 'Krinapara' was written he pronounced it 'Krinafara'; he was much elated by this accomplishment, no one else in the hut being capable of giving full effect to the 'f's.

Not a vestige of expression could be seen on a single face. Everything was serious, rigid, solemn, as befits a religious service. The final prayer was read by Odarpi.

*'Aminn!'*

The book remained open in his hands, his head bent.

The service was over.

Kara yawned, Doumidia yawned, Tigayet yawned, Tekri yawned. And so did I. Odarpi stretched himself and we all did likewise. There were resounding 'yaa's.

We hastened outside into the light of day. Happiness must find an outlet.

I had three puppies; the son of Kiviok,<sup>2</sup> himself a grandson of our dear old Arnatayik, 'the woman with many husbands', whom we had on our 1934-5 expedition; and

<sup>1</sup> The numerical system of the Eskimo is based on multiples of 5 (the five fingers). Above twenty (which is indicated by the expression 'a complete man', i.e. a man with 10 fingers and 10 toes), the word 'many' is used.

The Eskimo were taught reading and writing by the Danes, as well as numbers, and they have kept the Danish numeration.

The Eskimo of Angmagssalik do not speak a word of Danish, but they count in Danish.

<sup>2</sup> Named after one of Knud Rasmussen's ships.

two others, the two daughters of Singarnangwak,<sup>1</sup> the dog which, with Pitermassi,<sup>2</sup> whom we had intended as her husband, would soon be on her way to France; these Kiviok had adopted as his own children.

The eldest, the son, was to be called Itlouwinâk, 'the man with the lop-sided face', in memory of the leader of my team who died a glorious death during our crossing of the Inlandsis.

The two others were to be called Timertsit<sup>3</sup> and Ekridi.<sup>4</sup> These are the names of weird beings which Eskimo superstition regards as inhabiting the great ice desert. My two bitch puppies were to be thus named because they crossed the Inlandsis in their mother's womb and were born on the very day of our arrival in 'the country of mankind'.

Lying flat on our faces, Doumidia and I were devouring bilberries, each of us eating those which the other had gathered.

Suddenly she said to me:

'Do you remember Binnti, who lives at Izertok?'

'Yes, of course I do. Is he dead?'

'Yes, he is. He died last year of an illness, and when he was ill and going to die it was most frightening. He was mad and said the most dreadful things.'

'What, for example?'

'He said that he wanted to go under the platform, as people used to do. You know that in past days, when the

<sup>1</sup> Named after the colour of her coat, silver grey.

<sup>2</sup> Named after a famous leader of dogs on the West coast of Greenland. For the names of the dogs and their history, see Appendix, p. 341.

<sup>3</sup> *Timertsit* - giants which carry an entire cooking apparatus attached to the lower jaw: a seal-oil lamp hangs from two straps, and above it is an enormous bowl in which they cook the entire carcasses of bears, seals, and narwhals, or a man with a team of dogs. We see here an instance of the obsession with the idea of food which is latent among all the Eskimo.

<sup>4</sup> *Ekridi* - A species of naked and hairy men who walk on all fours, and are the worst enemies which the Eskimo have to contend with.

Knud Rasmussen has shown that, according to the legends, the *Ekridi* are the survivors of the Indian redskins, with whom (many years ago, before their migration to Greenland) the Eskimo fought battles in which much blood was shed.

Angakout<sup>1</sup> were ill, they used to creep right under the platform, and that made a lot of people in the hut just slowly die. Well, as Binnti was a bit of an Angakok himself, everyone at Isortoq got very frightened. You know, when people who were ill were sick it looked just like weak coffee; but with Binnti, it was quite, quite black. When he'd stopped breathing and was dead, he was hot all over and his flesh stayed alive for a long time afterwards. His wife dressed him as fast as she could. And even when his flesh was dead, he stayed quite hot. So then they took him out and put him on the umiak<sup>2</sup> stand. You remember Binnti? He was a little fellow. They thought that two men would be able to carry him, but it needed four.

'Orto threw his blanket into the sea because it smelt so bad. Directly it was in the water it cried out like a man.'

'What, the blanket?'

'Yes.'

'But tell me, Doumidia, was Orto ill too?'

'Oh no, just a bit of a cold like we all have when the big boat comes in the summer-time.'

*Monday, 17th August, 1936.*

Tekri, a man of twenty-eight, squatting down on a rock not far from the tent with his paralysed legs folded beneath him, was making a prop for his gun.

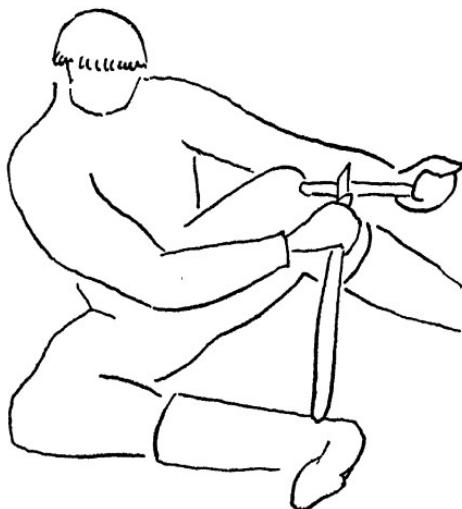
Drawing his knife towards him, he was holding one of the uprights for the prop secured against his knee; the knife was the same one which, well sharpened, was used yesterday for shaving the hair on the nape of my neck.

Tekri bent his head aside and looked carefully along the line of the upright to make sure that it was true. Sud-

<sup>1</sup> *Angakok*, plural, *Angakout* - wizards, Eskimo sorcerers. See glossary, Appendix, p. 346.

<sup>2</sup> *Oumiak* - a boat used by Eskimo families. Over its wooden skeleton greased sealskins are stretched. Its length varies from about 22 to 32 feet, with a width of about five feet in the centre. Everything is piled up in it - furs, skin, tents, stores of food, seals killed during the journey, basins, boxes, wooden planks - and children, old men, and dogs. A man, seated astern, steers. The rowing is usually done by the women.

denly, without raising his eyes, he seemed to become conscious of something, some black object floating on the water. Without moving, he looked up.



'Anera,'<sup>1</sup> he said to himself.

He reached out for his gun, and crept cautiously along on his hands and knees, keeping his eyes fixed on the seal. The animal, on the surface of the water, looked to the right and to the left, swimming this way and that. A long-drawn-out, gentle note, varying in pitch, was then heard; it was Tekri whistling. The seal, his curiosity aroused, stopped swimming, raised his head higher, turned it in the direction from which this strange music was coming, and stopped dead.

'I've killed a seal,' Tekri cried out to Yosepi, who rushed up at the sound of the shot.

No time was lost in getting it ashore. It was a young hooded seal of a fair size. The water all round the kayak was stained with its blood.

I secured a leather thong round its neck, and whilst Kara and I hauled away at it, Tigayet and Doumidia seized its fins which, however, merely slipped through their hands.

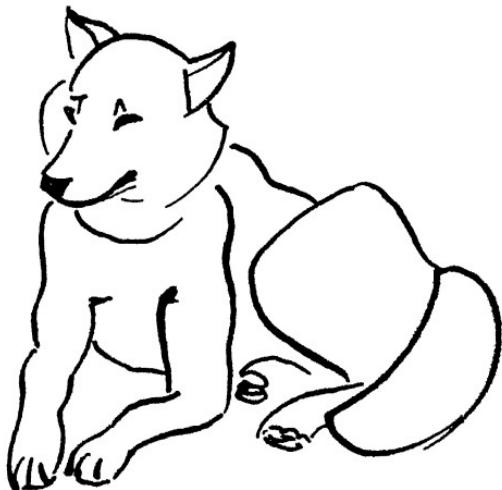
<sup>1</sup> A young hooded seal.

'He's defending himself,' they cried out, laughing.  
They bent down and seized the fins in their teeth to get a better hold.

Timertsit was lying upside down on my knees, her little stomach swollen from over-eating.

She opened first one eye and then the other, yawned, and licked my hands. Then she took one of my fingers between her little teeth and gently nibbled it and, finding that I took no notice, bit harder. A finger has a salty taste and is doubtless good to lick. Then she looked at me again, stretched herself, climbed on to the packing-case which served me for a table, and began to gnaw at the end of my pencil.

But her stomach was such a heavy burden that she was obliged to sit down on her hindquarters, with her legs wide apart to give it room.



Doumidia brought along a piece of the seal for the three puppies, lifting it high in the air above the pack of dogs which was following her. Keeping them in order was no easy matter.

Gathered in a circle around the puppies while they ate

were all the other dogs, eagerly waiting, their muzzles on a level with the ground. Inero and Tioralak (the sparrow of the snows) crept gently towards the group formed by the growling, excited puppies. Timertsit, from whom Itlou-winâk, who was greedier and ate more quickly, tried to steal her portion, put up a show of resistance, growled, and showed her teeth in a manner which promised well for the future.

The tip of her muzzle, which in most cases is white, was a dark carmine, and her chest and forepaws were of the same colour.

It was not long before all that remained of the seal was a small quantity of vertebrae, which are more than the teeth of very small dogs can tackle. I gave them to Waps, whose udders were beginning to swell, a sign of pregnancy.

A sudden leap, a snarl, and Tioralak had seized some bones and darted across the camp at full gallop, with the whole pack of dogs after him in full cry. Running with his body almost touching the ground and his head stretched forward to keep it as far away as possible from his pursuers, he strove to break the bones by various movements of his jaws. Failing to do this, and with Atlalik ('the mottled dog') too close on his heels, he made violent efforts, with occasional spasmodic leaps ahead, to swallow the prey whole.

Across the camp and over the rocks the mad helter-skelter continued, in zigzags, circles, spirals, and figures of eight.

Atlalik was then overtaken and passed by Inero who, with a jerk of his shoulder, upset Tioralak, seized the prey from him and, no longer pursuing but himself pursued, continued the hunt at the head of the others, with Atlalik and Kranorsouak ('the large black dog') close at his heels. Tioralak returned to me with his tail between his legs, howling bitterly.

I went forward to congratulate him on his turn of speed and cheer him up, when suddenly he leapt behind a rock where Inero had been driven into a corner, seized the bone

over which Inero, Atlalik, and Kraoserodidik ('the dog who wears a collar') were quarrelling, and bolted away hell for leather, leaving all his pursuers far behind.

Amongst the rocks Kranorsouak stumbled; he was being followed by Anguinek (the large dog), who was as quarrelsome as ever and took advantage of his position to make an attack on the other dog.

Anguinek was a skunk and I disliked his habit of displaying his strength on those weaker than himself. I hurled myself on the two dogs, who came toppling down in an indistinguishable heap between the rocks, growling and snarling at each other; and while Krano.souak, whom I had now set free, continued the chase, I laid hold of Anguinek, forced his head between my knees, and gave him a good beating with the handle of my whip, on the muzzle.

His head turned from side to side, as he strove to avoid the blows; and, as may often happen in such cases, I gave myself a violent one on the knee. No sooner was his punishment over and I had released him than he turned his head in every direction to try and discover what had become of the medley. While he was thus engaged I returned to my tent limping.

Seated in front of the tent opening was Waps, calmly gnawing the five vertebrae, the origin of the whole dispute.

The other dogs had disappeared.

*Tuesday, 18th August, 1936.*

Unpacked cases, and damaged my thumb with a hammer. Put out clothes. I found some boxes of sweets and a bundle of fashion papers—*Femina*, *Vogue*. I enjoyed myself immensely.

On the front page of a copy of *Femina* of the previous March, there was a portrait of a pretty girl, whom I should much have liked to meet.

'Is she pretty?' Doumidia asked me.

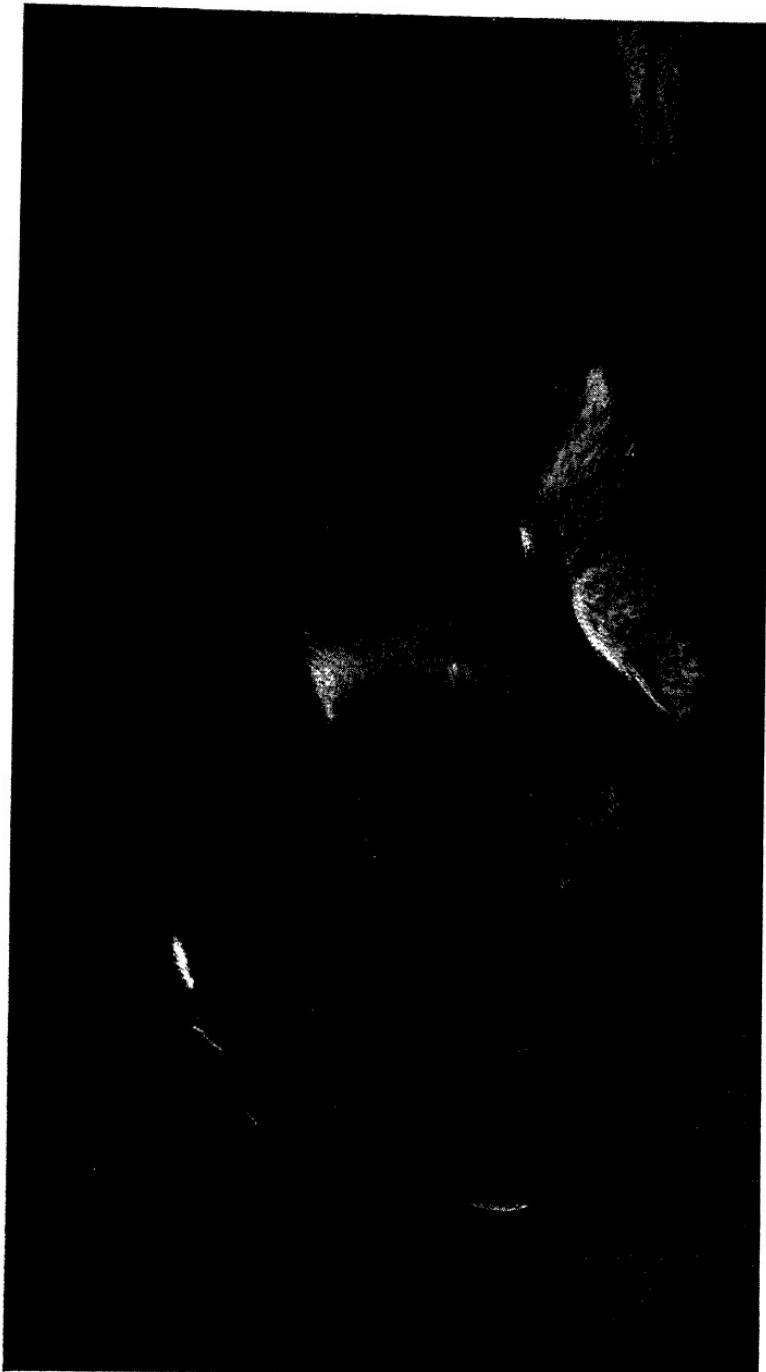
'Yes, very pretty,' I said.

'She's ugly—very ugly,' was Doumidia's reply.

ARCTIC SCENE









Then, a moment later:  
 'Do you *really* think she's pretty?'  
 'Yes, I do, and so would all the white men.'  
 'But you do, too?' she insisted, not quite believing what I said.  
 'Yes, of course I do, of course I do.'  
 Thereupon Doumidia shook her head, in commisera-tion.

I gave Ogui a piece of sauerkraut. He fled howling, with his tongue hanging out, spitting and dribbling, and calling me a dirty dog.

*Friday, 21st August, 1936.*  
 Franco's navy bombards Irun  
 and Saint-Sebastian.

Détré beats the world's height record.

The Reich demands reparations  
 from the Government of Madrid.

(Press extracts added in December 1937)

Doumidia said to me, suddenly:  
 'Wittou, I should like to be able to write well.'  
 'But why? You *can* write.'  
 'Yes, but it's difficult to read afterwards, and it doesn't look nice. I want to be able to write properly.'  
 'But tell me why, little girl.'  
 'Because when I am able to write well, I shall write down everything I hear for you to read, and when you've gone I shall be able to write you letters, too.'

From the Book of Ecclesiastes, son of David, King of Jerusalem:

'If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he.'

' . . . Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told,  
yet hath he seen no good.'

' . . . Better, is an handful with quietness, than both  
the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.'

I was reading aloud, deep in my Bible. I enjoyed the sound of my voice as it uttered words in French,<sup>1</sup> and a complete lack of comprehension on the part of the audience in no wise prevented them from sharing my own enjoyment. Sitting in the tent were Kara, Doumidia, and Yosepi. I closed the book, but they wanted more. However, to stop their entreaties I began singing a pizek, one of their old pagan songs of days gone by.

Doumidia nudged me to make me stop, and said:

'Ouma,<sup>2</sup> be quiet. You've only just been reading that Book. Be quiet. Don't sing that.'

'Why not,' I answered. 'Those songs are your songs. We have ours too.'

'Yes, but God wouldn't like it.'

'God sees and hears everything. He hears us, He sees us, and He knows our thoughts. He knows exactly what I am thinking at this moment, and He knows that I am thinking nothing wrong.'

Doumidia gazed at me for some moments, laid a hand on my arm and said:

'How funny! Now I see for the first time that you have thoughts. I believed you hadn't got any, that you were just like the other Kratouna.'<sup>3</sup>

'What! You really believed that the Kratouna have no thoughts?'

'Oh, I can't say for certain.'

'But look here, Doumidia, you don't really know the

<sup>1</sup> During the whole of that year (August 1936 to August 1937), I spoke Eskimo every day, and no other language whatsoever. In March and May only, at the time of my two expeditions with sleigh to the South, for two periods of about a fortnight each I spoke a little English, a little German, and a little Danish or Norwegian.

At the present time I speak Eskimo with entire fluency: if two Eskimo are chatting together without paying any attention to me I can understand everything they say and express any thoughts of my own.

<sup>2</sup> White men.

Kratouna. You have seen very few of them. You only know four. And as for me – well, you know me very little better than the others. What is it that makes you believe that?’

‘I feel sure it’s God,’ she answered, thoughtfully.

This left me speechless. But a few moments later I added:

‘But the Kratouna have known God for many, many years. Thousands of men have died, and their sons after them, winter after winter. And all of them knew God. And that Book there is as old as the world. But you people here have only known God for thirty years, and it was the Kratouna who taught you about Him. Before that you had the Angakout. And that’s all I have to say.’

Doumidia pondered over this. Then she said:

‘Yes, you must be right. But I had always believed that we were the only people who really understood God.’

She said no more. She had made a great discovery.

*Saturday, 22nd August, 1936.*

As soon as the sun has set behind the mountain of Nuluk the wind rises.

Well do I know the wind of the Jura forests, that wind which bears the scent of box, of fir, of cyclamen. You hear it, you follow its course, you understand it. You recognise it, and know that it can be none other. It surprises no one; no one asks what it is.

Here, it begins in the mountains. It comes without warning, a confused, rushing undercurrent of sound, like that of a bellows, filling the silence. You think it is the sea, or a distant waterfall, or perhaps silence itself. There are times when, in the middle of the night, this silence makes way for another silence – a real silence: and it is only then that you realise that there was ‘something’ which came before it: you listen, but you hear nothing. Then, suddenly, once more there is the same rushing, hissing sound, everywhere. But the sea never pauses like that,

never ceases from its murmuring; nor does a waterfall. I asked what it was.

'What? Don't you know yet?' they answered.

And soon, added to this sound, there came a strange, whispering murmur from the sea, a plashing, rippling sound, faint, almost inaudible, but quite near by, over there at the edge of the rock. Somewhere or another the wind had touched the fjord.

Then, on the other shore, over towards Tsiokra, a dark grey streak, almost blue, appeared on the water's surface.

The wind came slowly, advancing in our direction. Already, nearly the whole of the fjord was dark grey, almost blue in colour. There still remained a streak of light grey near by, along the shore before us. The dark grey encroached slowly on the light, and reached the pebbles on our strand. The wind was near us, had almost reached us, but nothing stirred as yet.

But soon the small flag, the one which crossed the Inlandsis with us, and which I had set up in front of my tent, showed signs of life.

And finally, the tent itself awakened. The wind had reached us.

The dogs sniffed at it, lifting up their noses. It was redolent with scents, borne from afar, scents of snow, of glaciers, and maybe of foxes and bears too.

The dogs got up, stretched themselves, and yawned. Atlalik growled at Inero, who suddenly sprang forward, followed by Atlalik and all the others, and there was a general helter-skelter across the camp. Ekidi and Timertsit trotted along in the rear on their short legs, yelping. Then they got in the track of the whirlwind. Frightened and disgusted, they came and took refuge near me and started on other and less boisterous games.

Peace and quiet were soon restored. I chained up the dogs for the night, which was already falling. The gulls were returning from the open sea to their homes near the head of the fjord. Young gulls, whose feathers were still grey, were followed by their white mothers.

The fjord grew dark; the ice took on a tint of grey; all colour faded from the mountains. Night had fallen.

Two crows passed slowly over us, and I could hear the flapping of their wings. 'Croa, croa,' they cried out to us—like every crow in the world—on their way to roost. All nature slept; and no sound could be heard save the cracking of the ice, which continues throughout the night, or the occasional thunder of an iceberg falling in ruin and collapse.

The night had not yet departed, but already the sun was getting ready to appear away over beyond the mountains, behind the sea. The Tsoutsoutsok,<sup>1</sup> a tiny, active creature and the earliest riser of all, flitted and darted from rock to rock, a herald of approaching day.

On the mountains the light fell apace, their summits rose-tinted, the glaciers blue. The wind grew silent and retired to rest, for soon it would be heard once more. The gulls made their way back to the sea. The dogs stretched themselves, dragged at their chains; and with intermittent howls, which rose in a gradual crescendo and were then abruptly broken off, they greeted the advent of a new-born day.

*10 p.m.* In my tent the hurricane lamp was burning. Yosepi and I were looking at cards. Like the good Eskimo hunter that he was, he was quick to recognise the markings, and his smartness surprised me. His frank, open face was pleasant to see.

My lamp, with its light falling on his face from above, accentuated the Mongol cast of his features.

He blew his nose in his hands and then licked his fingers.

*Monday, 24th August, 1936.*

Outside the hut, which was still in a state of dilapidation,<sup>2</sup> there was an old pan, quite black and covered with

<sup>1</sup> Sparrow.

<sup>2</sup> The Eskimo live in tents during the summer, abandoning their huts, which soon fall into ruin and are rebuilt at the beginning of the autumn.

a layer of sticky grease, and an old plank in the same condition. Each of these was held up in a sloping position by a piece of wood, with small baits suspended below. To each piece of wood a length of string, which reached the door, was attached. Behind the door Yosepi and Kara were waiting. They were snaring tadipa:<sup>1</sup> these birds, with their wings and feathers, are about half the size of one's fist.

A young tadipa was caught. It had long feet, a long beak, large eyes, and very fine brown and white feathers.

'Now look,' Odarpi said to me.

He took the bird in both hands, placed his forefinger over the little heart which was beating very rapidly, and pressed upon it. The eyes closed, the heart stopped beating.

I spent the whole day in writing notes on the kayak, the methods of construction, the material used, the outer covering. I had a feeling of irresistible compulsion to make notes for works giving full and detailed information. Could that have been why I came to Greenland?<sup>2</sup>

*Tuesday, 25th August, 1936.*

Our stock both of bear's meat and seal's meat was exhausted. Nearly all my companions had a horror of eating birds and would not touch them.

Doumidia was sitting behind me and sulking. I had just explained to her that if we wanted to have food to eat and cigarettes to smoke for the whole year, we should have to ration ourselves: but she had not understood. For centuries past the men of her race have lived from hand to mouth, and their conception of forethought and caution is rudimentary.

<sup>1</sup> A species of swallow.

<sup>2</sup> These notes will enable me to write technical works on the ethnography of the Eskimo of Angmagssalik, which will supplement other similar works already in existence. Every work of this nature, whether it relates to the Eskimo, the Negroes, or the Polynesians, is equivalent to a small stone in the great edifice which may some day be erected — a work entitled 'History of the Culture of Humanity'.

The verb 'to economise' is not included in the vocabulary of the Eskimo of Angmagssalik.

*Thursday, 27th August, 1936.*

Jean MacDonald marries Gene Raymond.

Rise in the price of bread.

The Reich puts an embargo on arms for Spain.

Restoration of period of two years' compulsory service in Germany.

(Extracts from newspapers added in December 1937)

Kara, Doumidia, and I started on the rebuilding of an old hut in which I was to keep my stores and provisions.

Odarpi had had a dream that night, and had written an account of it which he read to me with a broad grin. Tekri had noted down an old fable which Kara had related to him. Yosepi, seated beside me, was chewing my gum and writing out a legend. And lastly, Doumidia was practising her writing.

Things were going well. . . .

Yosepi asked me where I lived in Europe. I gave him some description of a large city and showed him photographs, whereupon he began laughing and asked me:

'Do they all have food to eat, all the people living in those houses?'

Seated behind my small tent, Kara was roaring with laughter. She was looking at some photographs of her fellow-countrymen taken by Thalbitzer in 1906.

Ubiquitous in very truth are fashion's whims.

We were beginning to grow anxious on account of Kristian and Mikidi who were to have rejoined us in the oumiak. Kristian's wife had died at Tasissaq, and it

occurred to us that he might be hesitating over the one hundred and twenty miles by which we were separated.

Timertsit had eaten a quantity of porridge soaked in water, with a little rancid seal-oil to give it savour; but not too much oil, which may 'perforate little dogs' insides', so they told me.

Stretched in the sun, she was giving her swollen stomach a rest. Little rippling sounds, sounds like that of a kitten mewing, proceeded therefrom. Puzzled and perhaps a little frightened, she pricked up her ears, looked at her stomach and listened, her head bent downwards.

Timertsit and Ekidi are asleep, curled up right in the middle of the bench on the bearskin which Doumidia spreads every morning on the floor.

From time to time Timertsit utters a sigh, smacks her tongue, scratches herself. Suddenly she raises her head, gets up, trots along the gangway which leads from my tent, finds the usual spot, makes water, comes trotting back, lies down and goes to sleep again.

*Monday, 31st August,*

Shots, a long way off. I dashed out of my tent, and Odarpi from his, to see what was happening. Could it be Kristian after all? There was a general helter-skelter up the hill.

Right out in the ice-field a black object met our gaze—an oumiak. A shout arose from every throat; for our relief at seeing Kristian once more was great indeed.

What a contrast there was between our excitement and joy, and the silence and depression of those who had just arrived in the oumiak, their faces drawn and weary after the fatigue of the journey, and branded with marks of grief for Tomazina's death!

There was an avalanche of news.

The Danish boat, the *Gerland Rask*, had arrived in the

district. She had left again for Scoresby Sound and would return to Tasissaq.

Micha and Robert had not yet started and were awaiting the last boat.

There had been some new arrivals at Tasissaq. Hagaard, a Norwegian doctor, with his wife and small daughter; Sara Tornessen, Mikelsen and his wife. There was, in fact, a whole crowd of people at Tasissaq, a regular Danish colony.

A Norwegian boat had arrived from Kangerdlugssuak, with Wager.

Sport had been good; eighteen bears, fifty narwhals.

An American boat had also arrived, having on board an extraordinary quantity of American youths who had been conducting a wild campaign of barter with the Eskimo, including such exchanges as an old and useless gun for a pair of trousers and a pullover!

With the exception of a few icebergs, there had been no ice anywhere. On the other hand, the ice-field in the North-West passage had been unusually dense.

No one appeared to know whether anything had arrived for me. I gave up all hope of ever seeing my motor-boat, my stores and provisions, or the little isoplac hut, 6 feet 6 inches square, which I had decided upon, before my departure, for the storage of documents and as a retreat in which I might work undisturbed. None of these precious things would ever arrive. It was evident that I should have to make the best of a bad job. . . .

Kristian was looking thoroughly seedy. Old Yoanna was stricken with influenza, and one could only hope that she would get through.

*Thursday, 3rd September, 1936.*

I had a quarrel with Mikidi.

'If you don't chain up your dogs,' he said to me in a surly tone of voice, 'some of them are going to get their feet smashed with the stones I shall throw at them.'

I replied calmly.

'I shall chain them up whenever I think it necessary: and moreover I am quite certain that you will not hurt my dogs by throwing stones at them. It would not be kind.'

'I'm not afraid of you - not one little bit am I,' was his answer.

Kristian maintained a stony silence.

Things were going badly. I could not imagine what had happened, and I was at a complete loss to know who had been influencing Kristian and Mikidi against me.<sup>1</sup>

*Friday, 4th September, 1936.*

11 p.m. Ekridi was asleep on my feet, shaking with hiccups. Doumidia, alongside me, was also sleeping, stretched full length, with her arms locked together behind her head, her lips half opened and revealing her remarkably white teeth (which she brushed twice daily), and her legs slightly apart. Timertsit had buried her little head in Doumidia's armpit and was dreaming happily there.

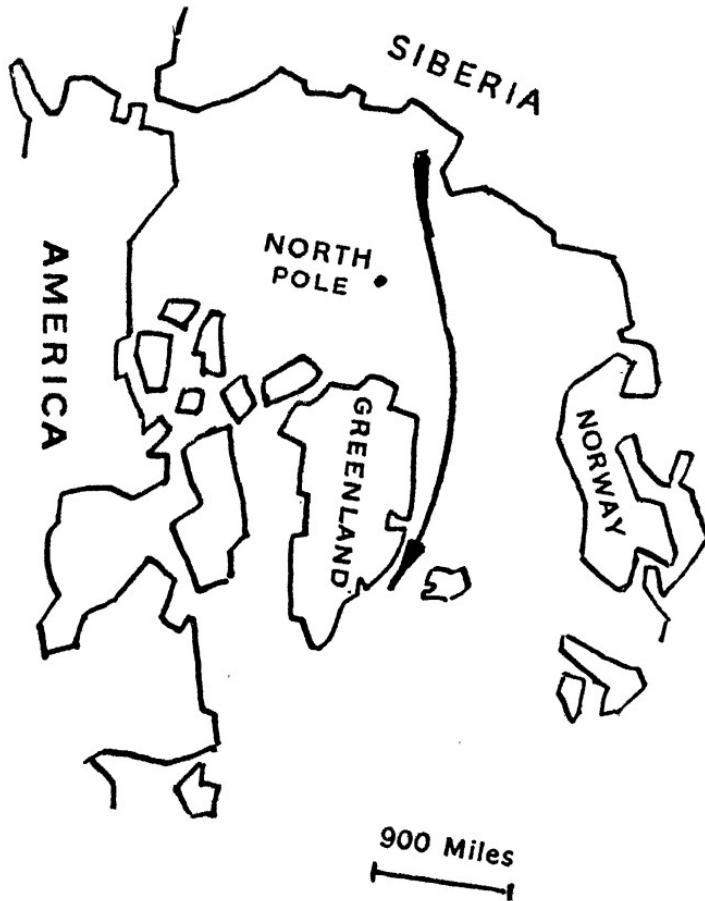
Later, Doumidia, turning back her white knitted jersey, discovered a louse. Which meant that I should find one too.

Odarpi was splitting the trunk of a tree which he had found on the previous day floating in the sea.<sup>2</sup> The water was trickling from the cleft, which was gradually increasing in width beneath the pressure of the wedge. The air was filled with the lovely scent of fir. I was back again in the Jura, with its forests, its saw-mills, its trees, its wind. . . .

<sup>1</sup> I did not discover this until two months later.

<sup>2</sup> These tree-trunks or driftwood come from Siberia. They descend the Siberian rivers and float thence as far as the Arctic Sea. Some of them go astray and are drawn into the glacial Polar current which crosses the Arctic Sea and then makes its way along the East coast of Greenland. After a period of from twenty to twenty-five years, they arrive by this means as far as Anmgagssalik, where the Eskimo always collect them with great care. Before the installation of the Danish trading centre forty years ago, this was their sole means of obtaining wood.

We were working hard at the building of the hut which was to be shared by us all, for winter would soon be upon us. It is the women's task to put up the walls; the children, boys and girls alike, are told off to root up the sods of earth which are to serve as cement for the stones. The men



carry stones which are too heavy for the others, and give necessary directions and advice.

Tigayet, Odarpi's wife, took handfuls of rich, damp earth and threw them, with a sort of nervous urgency, out of the window. She gave an impression that she was

working in spasms, in feverish haste. Earth was flying about in all directions.

I looked on, a little sadly. I should dearly have liked all those sods, that earth scattered about and wasted, for building my little hutch. But when Tigayet is in one of her wild moods it is wiser not to interfere.

Doumidia came to me this morning, took a few hairs of my five-days-old beard between her teeth, and pretended to pull them out in the way in which a sealskin is depilated, having been previously soaked in urine.

"You're prickly, and you look like a sea-urchin," she said to me, disgusted.

Old Yoanna complained of draughts in the hut, which she declared would be warmer if there were a door at the other end of the entrance passage. But the exit was too wide.

*Sunday, 6th September, 1936.*

Hardly slept at all. Waps was whimpering and dragging at his chain the whole night, with Kranorsouak howling in sympathy. The rain was beating a wild tattoo on the tent. I made an effort to get up, slip on my sealskin boots and pullover, and go out and set Waps free; and when I had succeeded she proceeded to bolt as though the Devil were behind her, and went and hid herself in the dog-hole which I had hollowed out for them!

This morning, in front of the blanket which closed the inner end of the entrance passage to the tent, I discovered Waps, lying on her side and suckling two puppies to which she had given birth during the night.

Starting on the previous day, I had adopted the simple life. I was limiting myself to two meals per diem. The first meal, taken on rising, consisted of porridge, ship's bread, Blécao or Ovomaltine. The second, when I was hungry, which usually happened between five and seven o'clock, was made up of seal or rice, or seal and macaroni, or rice

\* Sea-urchins, mussels, and small oysters are found.

and chocolate, or again—though less often, for I was sparing with my tinned foods—of sauerkraut or stew.

*Monday, 7th September, 1936.*

Maryse Hilsz wins the Hélène Boucher cup with 366 kilometres an hour.

Police disguised as a pair of lovers and a drunken man arrest a kidnapper.

The *Queen Mary* beats the *Normandie* and wins the blue ribbon.

Furious resumption of the battle of Irun.

Victory of Michel Detryat in the United States.

(Press extracts added in December 1937)

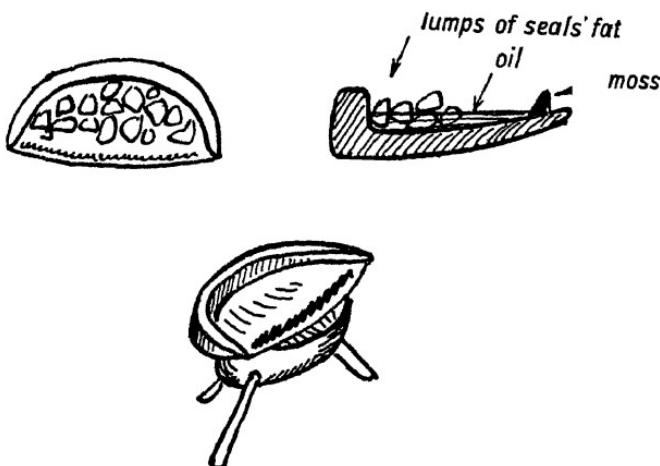
Our profession as hunters of the seal was abruptly changed to that of fishermen. The three men had just returned in a state of great excitement, the kayaks being loaded with huge salmon,<sup>1</sup> which they had harpooned with their noukit, their harpoon for birds (which were all that were available). They told us that they had left behind twice as many fish as they could bring back; the river, no more than a few yards wide, had been seething with salmon. Their eyes glistened, and they all spoke at the same time.

It was decided that, as soon as the weather should permit, a joint expedition should be made in the umiak.

<sup>1</sup> These fish are very plentiful at Angmagssalik, but the Eskimo rarely fish for them, even in times of famine, for ‘they are hunters, not fishermen’.

Among many other varieties of fish, those chiefly found are salmon, cod, red mullet, halibut, caplin, etc.

Old Yoanna was crouching in front of the ounakrit,<sup>1</sup> or oil lamp, over which salmon, slit down the middle but not cleaned, were in process of cooking. She was engaged in slowly munching long strips of seal's fat, spitting the oil into the pan. This oil would spread over the surface of the water and the cooking of the fish be all the better for it.



Standing by the upturned oumiak Kara, Doumidia, and Tipou were engaged in eating, with gestures like those of greedy children. In their left hands each one held a portion of raw seal's meat, already high. A corpse-like odour invaded the surrounding atmosphere for a considerable distance. Surrounding them were the puppies, running about and yapping, their noses in the air, and greatly excited by the smell.

<sup>1</sup> Ounakrit – oil lamp. These lamps are carved with a knife in soft stone, steatite (soap-stone), and then polished with a stone. Blocks of tallow or grease are placed at the bottom, and moss soaked in oil is laid on the edge, and then lighted. The heat melts the blocks and the oil thus produced feeds the wick formed by the moss.

The flame of these lamps serves for lighting, heating and cooking.

In former times, before the Danish trading centre was instituted, large bowls, also cut from steatite (which is found in the district) were utilised.

*Arpertileq,**Tuesday, 8th September, 1936.*

Fine weather.

We started off in the oumiak to fish for salmon. On our arrival we saw in the distance three men who had reached there ahead of us, and were already harpooning with great energy, with rapid movements like those of a gardener busily engaged in using a rake. Their harpoons consisted of long poles finished off at the end by a bent nail in the form of a hook.

On reaching the mountain torrent, I noticed that the water had become thickened and muddy on account of the recent rains; this explained the hasty, rapid methods of my companions, who did their harpooning blindly, without taking aim.

On the pebbles, with the light reflected from their bodies in bluish tints, the salmon lay quivering. The mountain torrent, which was a secondary offshoot from a glacier which came to an end at a higher level, flowed over a very wide estuary of shingle and slime. There were some overhanging ice pillars which did not look particularly dangerous; and it occurred to me that this might make a good route for an ascent into the hinterland,<sup>1</sup> that unknown region which has proved a magnet for us all, Watkins and his comrades, and now for Micha, Robert, Knuth, and myself.

Beneath the shelter of the rocks which overhung the torrent, the women were rummaging about in every direction, busily engaged in collecting and bringing back the salmon. They splashed and floundered in the water as high as their waists, and their breeches, made on the Scandinavian model with elastics everywhere, dripped with water as each one rose from stooping.

I abandoned the net which I had brought with me and leapt across the stream. On the shingle at the base of a

<sup>1</sup> It is in fact my intention to make an attempt to explore the unknown and mountainous interior which lies between the coast of Angmagssalik and Mount Forel (see Map, p. 187).

huge rock a big salmon, left high and dry by the receding tide, was slowly dying. It was my first catch.

I then fixed the net across the stream and threw stones in the water to drive the salmon into the net. Suddenly, after a particularly large stone had made its splash, a salmon's tail appeared on the surface; and I made my second catch.

Kristian and I took up the net and dragged it along with us as we made our way down the stream, with the water half-way up to our waists, and so cold that I was obliged to call a halt, as my head was beginning to ache.

Each salmon caught was a signal for shouts and cries from men and women alike. There was splashing, yelling, ragging, laughter.

We returned to the oumiak as night was falling. I dragged along behind me all the salmon which we had netted, amounting to about fifty in all. The sun had long since set. With the exception of the mountain tops, which were still a rosy pink, Nature had clothed herself in tints of blue.

Walking in the water, I followed the course of the stream down to the sea, and then along the shore to the oumiak. Behind me the salmon, threaded on a long strap passed through the mouth and gills, seemed to be swimming, as though to help me on my way.

The upturned oumiak was our only shelter. For sleep, I had the whole of one end, with waterproof ground sheet which, battened down on the bottom of the boat and kept in place by two stones, also served to close up the opening. Stretched out at full length under the thwarts in my sleeping-bag with the whole of the woodwork above me, and Doumidia and Yosepi at my side, I had found a new home.

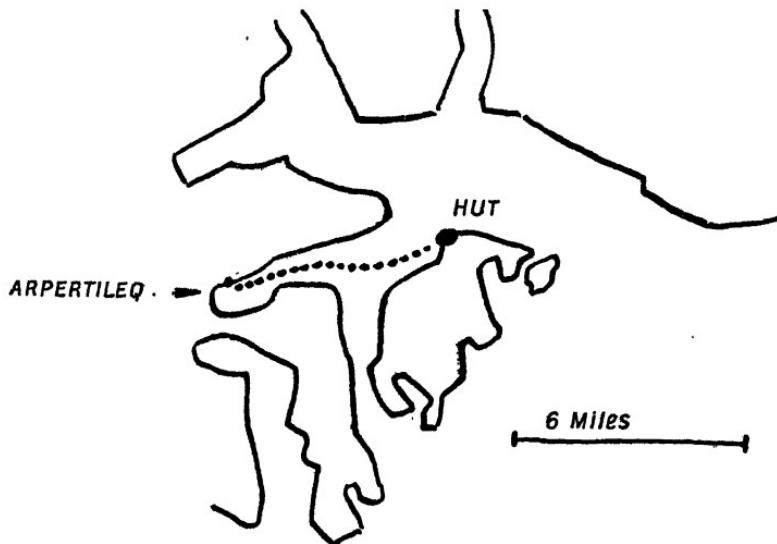
Ekridi and Timertsit had overeaten themselves, and their stomachs were an alarming sight. As I was edging myself along beneath the upturned boat in the middle of



DOUMIDIA



the night, I discovered Ekridi stretched out on my sleeping-bag. She was lying on her side, and her paws were lifted by her swollen stomach into a horizontal position. My sleeping-bag was quite wet; she had forgotten herself more than once. She was so sound asleep that when I threw her to the end of the bag, by my feet, she did not stir. All night long little whimpering whistling noises came from her direction.



*Arpertileq,*

*Tuesday, 9th September, 1936.*

The sky was overcast. I went to fetch the night's catch. Little Aroni came with me. On the way, at the very edge of the sea, my eye was caught by a glint of silver. A salmon had become detached from the straps used for hauling the fish, and nothing remained but the tail and a piece of skin. The sea-lice had eaten him. Aroni picked him up, laid him on a pebble, and said:

'That'll be for the raven.'

We returned to the hut, rowing in silence through the mist, with night fast falling around us.

Scarcely had we arrived, when an enormous iceberg<sup>1</sup> collapsed in ruins. Its appearance was that of a fortified stronghold with twin dungeons. One of these suddenly gave way, thereby setting in motion the whole of the huge mass which gradually crumbled away to the accompaniment of a noise of thunder, stirring up waves and foam. The surrounding icebergs were swayed from side to side as though they were in a rough sea. These waves, on reaching the hut, dashed themselves against the rocks in great eddies of foam, which climbed to the watchers' feet.

*Kangerdlugssuatsiaq,*

*Thursday, 10th September, 1936.*

Spent the day in hanging up salmon for drying, in various places out of reach of the dogs.

*Friday, 11th September, 1936.*

The roof of the communal hut was finished. Big tree-trunks brought from Siberia by the glacial Polar current were used for the beams. Large sods were then laid out and distributed over pieces of wood which had been placed haphazard on the tree-trunks; and over these a layer of earth was spread, with shrubs at intervals between the seal-skins – disused umiak coverings which, more or less effectively, would be keeping out the rain. A quantity of stones was placed over the skins to prevent their being blown away by high winds.

*Sunday, 13th September, 1936.*

Last night Krenerak (the black dog) broke the fastening of his chain, and then made an attempt to steal some salmon which were drying at the top of the cliff. He slipped on the rocks, his chain was caught in a fissure, and he was hanged. Kara cut him up.

<sup>1</sup> Varying with the density of the ice, the submerged portion of an iceberg is from five to nine times greater than that which lies above the surface.

He was one of the finest and most fearless of my twenty-five dogs. He was a member of the splendid team which I had on the West coast, and was with us when we made the journey across the Ice Cape.

*Monday, 14th September, 1936.*

7 p.m. Foul weather. The curtain of rain was so thick that I could not see the hut which was barely a hundred yards away. The nekryak (NE. wind) blew in fierce gusts, driving the rain on to the hut in a violent, hysterical tattoo.

While I was eating I felt a drop of rain on my neck, then another on my hand. Soon they were falling everywhere.

Along the lower edge of the tent covering the water flowed in trickling streamlets, especially on the windward side where the pressure was bending the bamboos. Everything within was soaked beneath; my sleeping-bag, my spare pullover, my note-books. And whilst I was engaged in draining off the water beneath the soil which, fortunately, was easily shifted, I felt drops falling with ever increasing rapidity on my back. My dripping hair was glued to my face. The reindeer skin and dog skin were soaked. I huddled up in the middle of the tent to be clear of the gutters, which it was impossible to dam!

I had barely recovered from the effects of all this commotion, when Yosepi and Gâba brought me a warning message from Kristian: the storm was an unusually violent one (I had my own ideas on that subject!) and there were grounds for fearing that at high tide some of my stores might be washed away by the waves. And so, amidst the wild disorder and confusion to which my tent was now reduced, I laid hold of my waterproof clothing.

Outside, the night was black as pitch. Beneath the assault of rain, and with water trickling down under my shirt, with Yosepi's and Gâba's help I got my planks and packing-cases safely back. As I was thus engaged some

icebergs, driven along by the wind, were passing in procession near the hut. In there, too, water was falling from the roof at many points, in big drops. But the platform was still dry. Lucky people!

Then came the return. This was worse still. I heard one of Kristian's dogs howling in the darkness with an intonation entirely human, and I could not restrain a shudder. It was a positive relief to meet Tioralak, who was not chained up.

Whenever a gust of wind exceeded all limits of violence, I turned in the direction of the wind where the tent covering was exposed to the greatest pressure, and cried out:

'Tamina!' (that's enough!)

Each time I did so, Doumidia reproached me in tones of alarm.

'You'll only make the weather still more angry,' she said, adding:

'And when you were on the great ice desert, is that what you used to say when the weather was stormy?'

'Yes, indeed I did, and I used to say magic formulas and incantations.'

She looked at me, uncertain whether to believe me or not.

'Do you really mean it?'

A few moments later she asked me what these incantations were. Thereupon I recited to her this little improvised poem which followed the lines of Eskimo incantations.

Yâ, yâ, petit vent, gentil vent, vent mignon,  
Yâ, yâ, petite neige, gentille neige, neige que j'aime;  
Yâ, yâ, soleil, étoiles, lune, arbres;  
Yâ, yâ, et voilà.

She understood. But the final 'So there you are' rather puzzled her.

'And did that make the wind blow less hard?' she asked.

My companions took great exception to my sleeping

in the tent unarmed; so I put cartridges in my revolver, which I kept within reach. In order to show me that this was no useless precaution, they told me a story of how Pilipo got a bear, two years earlier.

Hearing the dogs barking one night, he went out to stop them. There was no moon. Twenty yards away from the hut, near the meat store, a large dog appeared to have broken loose and was rummaging about among the stones. Pilipo shouted to him to go away, but without result. He then returned to the hut and told the others what had happened; and Kristian and Mikidi went out to investigate, and threw stones at the animal until it lifted its head. It was a bear.

## CHAPTER II

### HAPPINESS IN A HOVEL

*Tuesday, 15th September, 1936.*  
500,000 Nazis at the Congress of  
Nuremberg.

Franco's troops occupy Saint-  
Sebastian.

Girl dwarf of sixteen found  
strangled in trunk.

Merrill and Richman beat record  
for double crossing of the  
Atlantic.

(Press extracts added in December 1937)

The hut<sup>1</sup> was finished. Its dimensions were about 20 feet by 16 feet 6 inches, and its height 5 feet 6 inches only.

Yoanna and Kara, having gathered up everything that was lying about, were scratching the planks with their nails. The three men were sawing and nailing.

'That's where you will be,' Kristian said to me, pointing out the corner of the window platform<sup>2</sup> along the wall.

'But I shall be obliged to lie with my legs always folded up. I shall never be able to sleep there.'

'You will do as we do. We can never stretch out our legs either,' Kristian answered.

'Yes, but you have been accustomed to that since you

<sup>1</sup> See plan of the hut. Appendix, p. 335.

<sup>2</sup> Window platforms reserved for the unmarried occupants of the hut. See the plan.

were children. After all, I am a Kratouna, and I'm taller than you.'

'Well, how long do you want it?'

'As far as this,' I said, taking a measure.

From the bottom of the window to the edge of the platform the measurement was about 5 feet 11 inches.

'Kagagatsé!' they all cried out. 'That's a platform fit for a Kringaranguitsek!'<sup>1</sup>

The hut was still empty. Seated on the middle of the platform, with her legs folded beneath her, was Yoanna, her oil lamp burning beside her.

'You see,' she said to me, 'I've come in. The winter has started now. The others will be coming presently.'

Driven in by the storm, the whole company was now assembled in the hut. The water was dripping down on to the window platform from all parts of the roof, in fast falling drops.

In order to protect himself from the rivulets of water which trickled over the planks of the roof, Tekri had taken up his 'Kra', the sealskin on which he slept. With his paralysed legs folded under him and his eyes half shut, he hummed a song. Drops of water fell on to his knees. With one finger he wiped the beam just above him on which the drops were forming.

Farther along the platform, with his legs hanging over it, Yosepi, lying stretched out on his back, and naked to the waist, was gazing at the grass which grew from the roof, and counting, with finger pointed upwards, the drops which were forming there. Gâba, with his head resting on his arm, was lying at full length by Yosepi's side. He had just come in, with the rain dripping from him.

Lying at the inner edge of the opposite platform, along the wall, with his legs drawn up over his stomach, and naked to the waist, Kristian was fast asleep, snoring.

Sitting at the edge of the platform, little Kerta, his

<sup>1</sup> A giant without a nose, who lives underground.

daughter, was looking at her navel, which seemed to have aroused her curiosity. She buried a finger in it, then removed the finger and looked at her stomach to watch the effect. The process was then repeated.

Her younger sister, Agoudo, also quite naked, was standing up at the edge of the platform and making efforts to twist her legs round one of the vertical beams which supported the roof.

Near her sat Kriwi, with her legs dangling. It was her fifteenth birthday. She was thoroughly washed and looking at her best. She had put on the beaded cap, which belonged to her sister Paoda, her smartest anorak,<sup>1</sup> her embroidered breeches, and her long red kamiks. Bunched up in all these clothes, she sat there without moving. Her mother, Yoanna, had given her some bilberries plucked the day before; my own present was some ship's bread, chocolate, and sugar. She kept her eyes fixed straight ahead, and when she became conscious that I was looking at her, she smiled.

Yoanna was seated beside her daughter, with one knee drawn up under her armpit, and holding down with her naked foot a sealskin sole of a shoe. The other leg was stretched out and projected over the edge of the platform; and her great toe, as it rose and fell with each effort she made to cut the sole, was lit up by the strong glare of the ounakrit. Grasping her knife, she made a series of fine, small slits round the edge of the sole; and finally, transferring it to her mouth, she proceeded to soften it by meticulously chewing the whole of the circumference with teeth which were already worn down to the level of her gums.

At the end of the hut, in the Kidi, Kerti and his brother Azak were playing together quite naked. They were hurling themselves at each other and shouting with laughter.

Paoda, bending over the large basin suspended over the ounakrit, was munching long tongues of fat. Pouting her lips, she drew them out slowly one by one, looked at the

<sup>1</sup> A reefer-jacket, with or without a hood.

surface of the water, and spat out the oil she extracted on to each spot to which it had not yet spread.

Her husband, Mikidi, sat at her feet, with his elbows on his knees. He said:

'Why shouldn't I clean my cartridges?'

Then he rose, dipped into the big receptacle used by the whole hut, and filled a basin with urine to the brim. Into this he threw a handful of cartridges, sat down again, sharpened a match to a point and began to pick his teeth.

Old Kara was telling long stories to Tipou and Patsiba to send them to sleep. Beside her, Odarpi, Tigayet and their three children already slept.

And finally, on the window platform there was I myself, busily writing. Next to me Doumidia was sitting, buried in thought.

All of a sudden, she asked me, pensively:  
'Do you like being here?'

*Wednesday, 16th September, 1936.*

The *Pourquoi Pas?* lost with all hands on the coast of Iceland. A single survivor only. Twenty-two bodies recovered, Charcot's amongst them.

Gessain and Pérez on board the Danish supply boat *Gertrud Rask*.

(Press extracts added in December 1937)

The weather was fine once more. Behind the hut there was an enormous heap of seal's fat which had been left untouched for years, and was now transformed into a kind of yellowish rock which exuded rivulets of pus that reflected the sunlight. The birds which alighted on it lost, first their feathers and then their lives. A week earlier Yosepi had killed four.

In this sticky, slimy mass Yosepi, Gâba, Kriwi, Doumidia and I floundered about with shouts of laughter. We

gathered handfuls of it which we threw into a large bowl. Our arms were smeared with it as high as the elbow, and it dripped down from our fingers in large, thick blocks like honey from the hands of Plick and Plock.

After spreading whole slabs of fat over the roof of the small hut in which stores had been kept, we filled up the interstices with this pouyak<sup>1</sup> which, in conformity with a method long established, would make the roof completely watertight.

Timertsit noticed us wading in this glutinous mass and decided to follow suit. Her head and paws grew black with the dirty, sticky mess, and she became a frightful object. Doumidia thereupon took her on her knees and washed her as she would a child. As though she were indeed a child, the little dog made continual efforts to escape from the soapy towel, and howled and cried. After being rinsed she looked a mournful and dejected little object, with her face peaky and reduced by the water which had stuck her fur together.

*Thursday, 17th September, 1936.*

Sunshine.

Stretched out in my sleeping-bag I watched the sun as it warmed the top of the tent and threw its colour into bright relief. Gently, slowly the circle of gold descended towards me.

'In our affection for our friends, we disregard their personal character.'

'Accustomed to hypocrisy by our upbringing, we do not try to understand the words which we hear, but rather to discover some hidden purpose lurking behind those words.'

'Only to nomads does life seem long.'

(HENRI FAUCONNIER)

*Friday, 18th September, 1936.*

I began to lay the foundations of the hutch which I had

<sup>1</sup> See glossary, Appendix, p. 347.

planned in order to have a quiet corner in which to work.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst I was writing, Kara, seated at the entrance, was telling Doumidia a story. To this I listened.

'And so she fell ill, and then she died. The whole of one side of her face dropped – all the flesh on one side of it fell away, and you could see the teeth, and bones. And it wasn't till then that she spoke about that sugar.'

'What? Who do you mean?'

'Tsaki's mother. She'd been to pick bilberries and found a whole heap of things that looked like sugar. So she ate it all up without paying any attention. And years later – not long ago – she talked about that just before she died, and she said if she was going to die then it was all on account of that sugar she'd eaten.'

'It couldn't have been sugar,' I said. 'At that time you didn't know what it was, did you?'

'No, no,' Kara answered, 'of course it wasn't real sugar. But we all of us know that it was something like sugar, and that those who ate it all died of an illness.'

The story of the heap of sugar, which in any case I was unable quite to fathom, led to another one about piles of bilberries heaped up by mysterious and unknown hands.

'Doumidia and I have often seen them,' Yosepi said.

'And did you gather them up?'

'No, indeed we didn't. You mustn't pick them up. Old people tell you you mustn't.'

'And who makes these heaps?'

'Diawoudou.'

'Diawoudou?' I asked, my curiosity aroused. 'What is it? Something like a toupidek?<sup>2</sup>'

'No, it's just a wicked man. You know, a kind of man that God has punished.'

<sup>1</sup> A hut measuring 20ft. by 16½ft., which contains more than 15 children and 10 adults, would not suggest ideal conditions for undisturbed work.

<sup>2</sup> Monstrous beings created, in various forms, by the *angakout*, sorcerers, or the *idizisset*, magicians. Some of them have a man's skull, a seal's body, a bear's hindquarters, and occasionally human hands. They vary according to the elements utilised by the *angakout* in their manufacture.

I gave a start on hearing this. The introduction of God into this story had given me a shock.

'Yes, yes,' Doumidia insisted, 'a wicked innguidi.'

'A what?'

'You know quite well: the servants God has - men with wings.'

Now I had understood. 'Innguidi' was the Eskimo pronunciation of the Danish word 'engel', angel.

Diawoudou? A wicked angel? The Devil himself, there could be no doubt about it! 'Diawoudou' was the Eskimo pronunciation of the Danish 'diawl'.

For several moments, this unexpected introduction of the Devil rendered me speechless. . . .

Kara, who was in the mood for story-telling, told me the story of old Idiyousi.

'He was very ill "with his chest". He had gone into the hut in summer and never left it till he died in the winter. He had put on his sealskin trousers and tied himself up in his Kra<sup>1</sup> so as not to catch cold. When he felt he was dying he asked his wife to give him an imoutak<sup>2</sup> and he started smoking happily. But he died before he'd finished it. The people in the hut wanted to dress him nicely before they buried him (that was a few years ago), but they discovered to their horror that for several months past he'd been living in his own excrement and was covered with it from head to foot.'

Doumidia was making bread with the black flour which I had brought with me. As I like it well baked and it was difficult to manage that over an ounakrit, I showed her how to make it up into thin rolls. The basins containing the dough were covered with pullovers and skins.

Odarpi explained to me the impossibility of using a metal lid.

'The lid begins to sweat,' he told me.

<sup>1</sup> Kra - a sealskin placed on the platform, on which one sleeps.

<sup>2</sup> Quid of tobacco smoked in a pipe.

'And do you know how that happens?' I asked.  
'Yes, of course. The metal feels hot, like we do.'  
'That may be. But don't you think it is the dampness of the bread that makes the lid wet?'  
'Oh, no. If it was the dampness of the bread, why shouldn't the pullovers that one puts over the basins sweat too?'

Tigayet was seated on the platform and playing with her youngest daughter, Tabita. She was holding her breast and moving it up and down like a fishing-line.

Tabita, with her lips pouted, was trying to catch it and laughing merrily. Then, suddenly, she uttered a yell and burst into tears.

*Saturday, 19th September, 1936.*

Bodies of those who perished in the *Pourquoi Pas?* brought back to Reykiavik.

Fierce struggle round the Alcazar at Toledo.

(Press extracts added in December 1937)

*4 o'clock in the morning.* Sleep impossible. My dogs (chained up to prevent damage) were making the devil's own din. It seemed necessary at all costs to cure them of that habit. Clothed in my pyjamas, I went out into the chilly night. At the first cut of the whip, Kroaserodidik, who had a horror of it, began to show fight, and tried to bite the whip each time that it whistled over his head. (For that form of punishment a single well-aimed lash is sufficient. Those that follow need not touch the delinquent; but the first one must be made to attain its object if the succeeding ones are to be effective and not regarded as mere bluff.) Inero, with more intelligence, avoided the whip by taking refuge behind Kroaserodidik.

Arnatak, on seeing me approach her, began immediately

to howl and dragged convulsively at her chain. As each blow fell, the howl was transformed into a kind of gurgle. I could not go on. As for Atlalik and Kivioq, they shammed death as the lash descended on them.

I returned to my tent, hoping that at last I might get some sleep. I loathe these general punishments, however necessary they may be.

Little Kerta was sitting on the ground with her legs stretched out, in a corner of the rocks. On a flat pebble, between her legs, she had placed a very thin grass sod which she had extracted with great care. With a seal's shoulder-blade in her right hand she was scraping away the earth which still clung to the roots. She showed me the shoulder-blade, and said:

'Look, I've got a nice tsaki,<sup>1</sup> too.'

And so she continued to play; and as she did so, her childish mind was holding a picture of herself with a scraping-board<sup>2</sup> before her, a skin laid upon it, and



<sup>1</sup> A knife used by women.

<sup>2</sup> Sealskins are placed, while still covered with their layer of grease, on the board used for scraping. With her tsaki, or woman's knife, the woman then detaches the grease from the



OLD YOANA



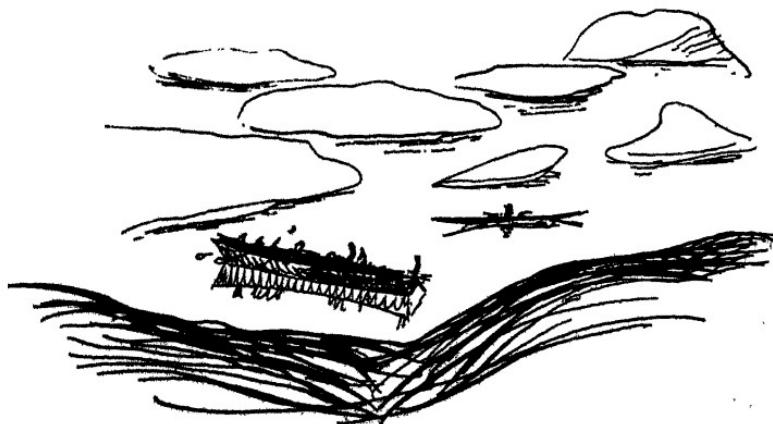
herself using a woman's knife, just as her mother would.

*Kringuerewa,*

*Sunday, 20th September, 1936.*

At four o'clock this morning we started off in the oumiak and in kayaks for the head of the fjord, forty miles distant. This was the first long journey we had made in the oumiak. The men's object was to hunt seals at the foot of the big glacier; the women intended to gather bilberries and angelica.

The Eskimo equivalent for angelica is 'kwenni'; in Danish, the word is 'kvan'. The two are probably connected; and this may be an instance of one of the few surviving traces of Scandinavian colonisation on the West coast in the eleventh century.



Suddenly, everyone in the oumiak stopped rowing. I myself was drawing. And I listened. Yoanna's voice was heard in a kind of incantation which rose and fell in rhythmical alternation, intoning some story.

"Go away, or I'll stick my knife into your face. Go away, or I'll stick my knife into your face!"

"But the man kept his head glued to the window, and he went on rowing, and they were all frightened."

' "Go away, or I'll stick my knife in your face. Go away, or I'll stick my knife in your face!"'

'But the man kept his head glued to the window. So he slashed at the man's head with his knife, through the window which was made of seals' intestines.'<sup>1</sup> Next day, they followed the tracks of blood in the snow, and they led straight to a snow grotto. It was a tsoutoup-iwa.'

'What is that?' I asked.

'You see this grotto,' Yoanna replied, pointing out an extent of glacier snow in which there were holes produced by the water from melted ice. 'There are men who live down in those. Not long ago, just before the Kratouna came,<sup>2</sup> some people saw a man who was looking through the window. So one of them slashed at him with a knife, and they noticed that his blood led to one of those grottos. But they didn't dare go in, it was too deep.'

'They ought to have had one of your boxes that throw out light,' Kara said.

The old Angakok Maratsi used to relate how, in former years before there was a glacier, one could travel northwards by oumiak from Sermilik to Kangerdlugssuatsiaq. The map shows that these two watersheds, which have since become glacial, join each other.

How can this be explained?

Was it imagination, was it induction - or verbal transmission dating from some period incredibly remote?

Sitting in my tent I inspected, rather anxiously, a tiny rash which had appeared on my chest. I was thinner than I had ever been before; and I noted with satisfaction that skin, and skin only, was to be seen in the region of my stomach. With my mode of life at the time this was hardly surprising.

<sup>1</sup> In former times, the window spaces were covered with dried seals' intestines, which thus became transparent. At the present day, the Eskimos are able to procure glass at the Danish trading centre.

<sup>2</sup> White men arrived for the first time in 1884 (the Danish Lieutenant Gustav Holm).

However, the eruption worried me. I rubbed myself with Nivea, which I had handy, and awaited results. The scent of the Nivea that evening, in my little tent set up alongside the oumiak in remote Kangerdlugssuatsiaq, was somewhat disturbing. It was rather too reminiscent of civilised womanhood. . . .

What a glorious country!

Only a short distance away, on the other side of the fjord, splendid peaks, bathed in the glow of the setting sun, and intersected by steep glaciers which run down to the level of the sea. Through the tent opening I could see two glaciers, flanked by mountains, which looked as though they were admiring themselves in a vertical mirror. On our side of the glacier were lovely blends of colour, earth covered with red and brown mosses, black rocks, ice with bluish tints. I could hear the mountain torrent rushing down in leaps and bounds at the foot of the cliffs which rose up behind my tent.

I felt that never again should I be able to remain long in a country where each patch of land is private property, a country with culture for its god.

*Tuesday, 22nd September, 1936.*

6 a.m. I was awakened by sounds of shouting. The weather was splendid. We were all to go off in the oumiak a little farther North, near the big glacier. I was told that it was wonderful there, alongside the glacier which extends right into the sea, and that there were quantities of pougouket (bilberries) and kwenni (angelica). I was hurried and hustled; they shouted to me to make haste. A few minutes later I was outside.

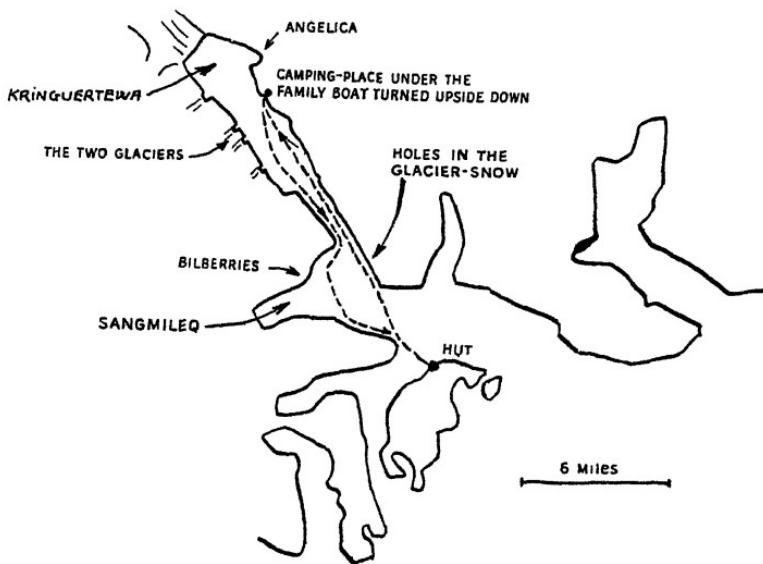
Everything was still under the oumiak.

In the cold wind, and without the sun's rays to warm me (the sun would not appear over the mountains until about nine o'clock), I waited with the men for half an hour, stamping my feet vigorously and asking every moment why we did not start. Finally, Odarpi ascended the hill to

the top in order to discover what the black band at the foot of the glacier might be, returning with the report that there was a high wind blowing from the North.

'Never mind,' I said, 'let us start.' No reply.

A few minutes later I was informed that we were going South. Which meant that we should return to the hut.



It had been the intention on the previous evening that we should spend the whole day here. Sport was good, the oumiak was not yet filled with seals, the bilberries were excellent, and the angelica waiting to be gathered. This morning the plan was cancelled, and we were to start on a long expedition for hunting and gathering. A short time later, my companions had already decided to go home again. . . .

With the wind rising, we made a start. Between two harpoons fixed in a vertical position in the oumiak I stretched the waterproof sheet which I used as a curtain at night. We made good speed, and the men in the kayaks

had some difficulty in following us in the oumiak's rippling wake. The days being still of long duration, we decided to make for the small lateral fjord of Sangmileq in order to gather bilberries. The scenery which met our gaze as we made our way along the coast was marvellous. Giant peaks, three times the height of a cathedral tower, raised their heads to heaven in unbroken succession, reddish in colour, and looking as though they would overwhelm blue glaciers and glacier snow alike.

We entered the Sangmileq fjord.

Shouts of joy and longing arose from the women and children in the oumiak as they descried a whole section of the mountains red and green with bilberries. But the men who had gone ahead in the kayaks were shouting some words which, though they were several times repeated, we failed to hear.

'Akripout. Now they want to go back,' said the women.

We had scarcely arrived when Gâba, using a large sporting gun of an 1862 pattern,<sup>1</sup> shot at a small water-hen. The shot fell short, and raised a fountain of water which threw the bird into the air. Stunned by the shock, the little creature remained for several minutes as though dead; then it revived. Yosepi rowed up in the kayak to where it lay on the surface, and a regular chase ensued. The bird dived, came up again, dived once more, narrowly escaping Yosepi's grasp, and then reappeared ahead of the kayak. At last Yosepi managed to lay hold of it; and having done so, he placed its head in his mouth and cracked the little skull between his teeth.

This evening, while I was writing, Yosepi appeared at the tent opening.

'You didn't call me just now, did you?'

'No. Why?'

<sup>1</sup> At the Danish trading centre the Eskimo can obtain rifles of the pattern used in the Danish army in 1862, a plain but stoutly constructed weapon. In former times the only weapon used in hunting was the harpoon (for bears, seals, birds, etc.). At the present day, every hunter has his own gun.

'I was outside a short time ago and I heard your voice calling "Yôsepayik!" Then I went back into the hut, and then I forgot all about it. After that I went out again, and as soon as I had got outside I heard your voice calling again. I listened, and I heard you calling out "Yôsepayik!" So I went to where your voice came from. But I saw the light in your tent, and your shadow – and then I knew it wasn't you.'

'What on earth are you talking about?'

'It was your voice calling.'

'My voice?'

'Yes, your voice. Last year Gâba heard Pilipo's voice calling when Pilipo was in the hut all the time.'

'Yes, and at Tokroda,' Doumidia said, 'I too heard my brother's voice calling. And he was at Isortoq.'

'And when I was at Tasissaq,' Kara said, 'I heard a voice I didn't recognise, in front of Salo's house. And when I went up into the loft, I heard the same voice calling at the foot of the stairs. And one night, in Monica's house, everyone in turn heard a voice calling.'

'Well? What is it, really?'

'I don't know,' Kara answered. 'It never used to be like that.'

'You believe you hear a voice – and there isn't any voice at all,' I said. 'It sounds rather as though you were dreaming.'

'Don't say that,' Doumidia put in, 'don't say that, because if you do you will hear it too, and no one can tell what it is.'

*Wednesday, 23rd September, 1936.*

This is a country of portent and mystery.

At five o'clock this morning I was awakened by a dog fight which was in progress. I sat up and shouted 'Dawa! Dawa!' As I made ready to get up, the fight ceased.

A few seconds later I was once more wrapped up, shivering, in my sleeping-bag (with the thermometer at 20 degrees above zero), when I heard Waps's little puppies crying.

The hussy must have left her box again and gone to sleep regardless of her family. I listened—and suddenly I heard Doumidia's voice, just outside my tent, calling me.

'Wittou!'

'What is it?'

'Wittou!' the voice came again.

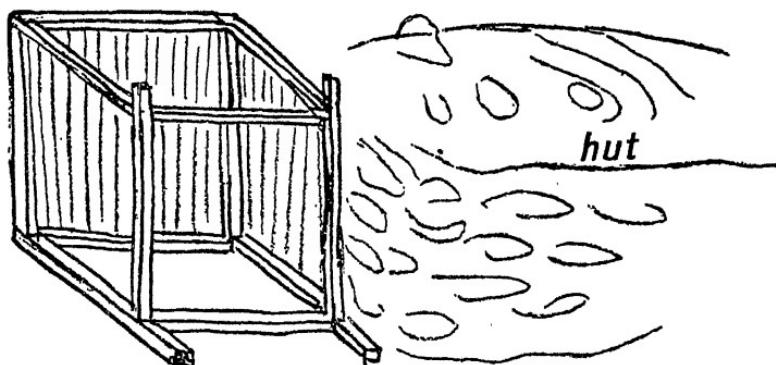
'Yes! What is it?'

Not a sound.

'What's the matter? Is it you, Doumidia?'

Complete silence.

I went out of the tent. There was no one to be seen—anywhere.



One of Odarpi's dogs gave birth to four puppies this afternoon. Tigayet threw one of them into the sea without killing it. It twisted and struggled a long while before it sank. The blood rushed to my head; and whilst I bawled out protests Tigayet stood apart, with her head bent and a morose and gloomy expression on her face.

I spent the day in putting together the framework for my little hutch.

It promised to be a draughty spot, seeing that I was obliged to limit myself to such material as I had available, which stopped short at packing-cases and wooden planks.

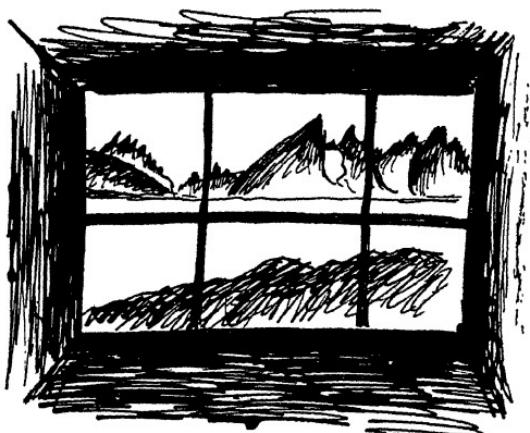
But I was already dreaming of the hours of work and writing which I should spend within its shelter.

It was almost nightfall when I returned to my tent this evening. All the children (and there were nearly fifteen of them) were collected on the space of flat ground where my tents were set up. No sooner had I arrived than I overheard them saying:

'Wittounguiyouk akerpok (nice little Wittou is coming).'  
I was thrilled.

*Friday, 25th September, 1936.*

This morning everyone went off in the umiak, with the exception of Tigayet, Paoda, and their children. I stayed behind to nail, to saw, to cart earth and carry stones. I was rather done up, but it was not an unpleasant feeling.



My window (with six panes) would give me a view of the fjord. Sitting at my table, I should have, not a mere section of a picture, but a complete and well-balanced design.

What one misses in a tent is a window; one needs that contact with the outside world which it affords. A tent, whether it be on the Ice Cape, at Kangerdlugssuatsiaq, at

Tasissaq, or in the Jura, is never more nor less than a tent.

The context is there, but only imagination can supply it.

10 p.m. My attack of exhaustion had passed off, and I was able to continue my writing. But my fingers, numbed by the strenuous work I had undertaken during the day, were loth to obey me.

Kranorsouak was hated by all the other dogs; and I believed that I had discovered the reason.

He had been added to Oukiok's team by Croft during the crossing of Greenland which he made in 1934 with Martin Lindsay.<sup>1</sup> During our first expedition he had been a favourite of the midwife Soupia, who had spoilt him. She had got him into the habit of staying night and day outside her door. It was his first separation from the team. During my year of absence, while the majority of my dogs were being utilised and cared for by Jensen, the Dane, Kranorsouak, again separated from the others, was looked after by the Danish hospital nurse,<sup>2</sup> 'Doudou', spoilt by her, and had then become leader of a team of very young dogs. This was the origin of his extreme jealousy of Oukiok, who was his chief.

And now, having become far too accustomed to spoiling and petting, and unable to bear any absence of a man to whom he had become devoted, he made such disturbance whenever I was away that I was compelled to let him off the chain.

On the return of our little hunting expedition to the

<sup>1</sup> In 1934, the Englishman Martin Lindsay crossed Greenland with his two companions Andrew Croft and Godfrey. On their arrival at Angmagssalik, they gave us the five dogs which they still possessed: 'Oukiok', winter, the team leader; Arnatayik, 'the woman with many husbands'; Kranorsouak, 'the big black dog', Tsoukoudayik, 'the chocolate coloured', and Pitermassi'.

<sup>2</sup> At Tasissaq, the Danish station for the Angmagssalik district, there are the Danish representative who manages the trading centre; the Danish radiotelegraphy operator; the Danish hospital nurse; and the pastor and the schoolmaster, two Eskimo from the West coast of Greenland who have become civilised.

head of the fjord, that is, after three days' absence, I barely recognised Kranorsouak. He had grown appallingly thin; the two bones of his loins stood out like knives. There he was, with drooping head and his tail between his legs. When he saw me coming, he looked as though he were waking from sleep. He had been terribly depressed during my absence.

The rest of the dogs, still chained up, were longing to share his freedom; and their jealousy soon turned to hatred. Kranorsouak, realising that he need only be a little farther away from his adversary than the length of his chain, had turned insolent.

A deplorable result of favouritism.

The ten children of the establishment were inside my unfinished hut. I heard their shouts and laughter, and without a word of warning I put my head through the window and made a horrible grimace, opening my eyes wide, blowing out my cheeks, and crinkling my nose. Shouts of joy and terror arose. For the whole of what remained of the afternoon, I had them all, including little Tsetay, at my heels, shouting and yelling at intervals.

'Wittou, Wittou, make us frightened again!'

And each time I failed to do immediately as they wished, their voices became impatient, or commanding, or full of entreaty. Happiness was mine.

*Saturday, 26th September, 1936.*

Four lions escape from their cage  
and spread panic in a village.

M. Perrin succeeds Mme Joliot-Curie at the Society for Scientific Research.

Full-dress debate on devaluation.

(Press extracts added in December 1937)

It was exactly five months ago, on the 26th April, at the

time of our overland ascent to the Ice Cape, that Knuth and I had set up our tents for the first time on the West coast, at the camp which we had christened 'Halibut Camp'.

I had therefore spent five months 'under canvas' – a period which might well make the boy scouts open their eyes.

I spent the whole day working – and without any assistance whatever. I transported huge stones by means of a carrier; trundled along with a basin filled with earth; and pulled up grass sods as the women do. I sawed, nailed, measured, put together. I made frames for door and window, nailed the roof, improved the walls.

Such was my day's programme.

*Sunday, 27th September, 1936.*

Robert and Micha must have arrived in France a long while ago now. I myself should not be there for another year, or nearly so.

The work was hanging fire. In order to stop up the gaps between the planks, I tried to stick newspaper on the wall inside the hutch. I took the papers which were in the packing-cases, giving preference to the sporting pages which contained but few photographs. I made a strongly adhesive glue with black flour and water, and stuck the paper on diagonally, and upside down.

It was a complete failure. Newspaper might make a first-rate wallpaper in my studio in Paris; and I half decided to adopt the idea. But in a tiny hutch 6 feet 6 inches square it simply wouldn't do at all.

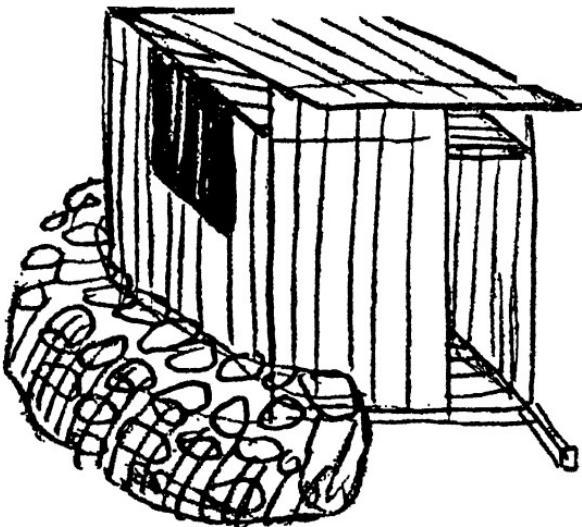
Next I tried cutting out the titles (*Paris-Soir, Le Matin*, etc.) and photographs, and making decorative designs. (No margins, no Greek key-patterns, no zigzags, if you please.) The failure was no less resounding.

To hell with paper, then. I decided on bare walls. They would add a certain flavour of 'The Gold Rush', of a story

of adventure by Mayne Reid or Jack London, and give a fillip to my imagination. To be the spectator of one's own life. . . .

I tore away the sheets of newspaper while they were still damp, rolled them into a ball, and with all due ceremony I threw them into the sea. I also removed from the hutch the pail half full of dirty water and black flour.

Tigayet, who had been displaying considerable inquisitiveness, came to see how I was getting on.



She looked round everywhere, rummaged about under all the planks, and then asked me, in a tone of violent reproach, why I had given *all* the newspapers to Kara, and not some at least to her. Then she went out, and in doing so she noticed the pail full of dirty water and flour.

'Wittou, what are you doing with that?'

'Nothing at present.'

'Why shouldn't the children eat it?'

'Certainly, so far as I'm concerned, Tigayet. But don't you see how dirty the water is? I have been dipping my

brush in it after using the brush on the dirty planks. I don't think it would be very good for little children.'

'Yes, of course, Wittou, I can see that the water is dirty. But that doesn't matter. I've only to take off the scum. . . .'

And off she went with the pail.

The children were playing around the hut.

'Wittou, Wittou, make us frightened again!'

Tigayet had just appeared on the scene. 'You see,' she said to me. 'She's finished it.'

And she pointed at little Tsetay, besmeared up to the eyes with a dark, sticky mess. The child had finished off the pail of dirty water and black flour.

Throughout the day the children were bringing me little new-born puppies to look at. Holding them by a single paw, with outstretched arms they held out the undeveloped little creatures, moaning and trembling; whitish in colour, with large heads.

'That one's mine,' Kidimani said.

'That one's mine,' Tsetay told me.

'That one's mine,' Azak said.

They pawed and handled the puppies, dropped them, put them in their jerseys, caressed them. I told them to hurry up and take the whole lot back to their mother; whereupon, as they usually tended to obedience, they ran off cheerfully enough, each one placing the puppy in his arms within reach of the maternal fount, and then taking another. . . .

All day long Kranorsouak was pawing the ground and dragging at his chain in the direction of the hutch, where I was working. He howled, whined, moaned continuously. As soon as I appeared he ceased, and I returned to my tent. As I drew farther and farther away, he was watching me, moving round in a semicircle with his chain drawn out to its fullest extent.

And as soon as I had disappeared in the tent he started a repetition of the whole performance.

Atlalik and Kroaserodidik had a fight. Now that Krennerak was dead, Kroaserodidik had become the leader, and leader he must remain. Atlalik appeared to be getting the best of it; and I let Anguinek loose. A few moments later, Atlalik was pinned down on the ground, already repenting his sins; and Anguinek, seizing an opportunity of paying off old scores in a long-standing feud, refused to let him go. Whereupon Kroaserodidik himself went for him.

Kroaserodidik is a good leader.

This evening, behind the ounakrit, little Azak, completely naked, was busy eating. He was nibbling at the head of a seal which was killed the other day. One by one he was extracting with his teeth the huge, thick, bristly hairs of the seal's muzzle. Then, with the handle of a spoon he made excavations in the skull through the occipital cavity, drew out portions of brain and offered them to me. They were excellent.

Tigayet was eating the head of a cod, caught a week earlier, and bleached by cooking. She pressed it against her lips and drew deep breaths, when *hey presto!*, out came the eye from its socket.

*Monday, 28th September, 1936.*

The oumiak returned to-day.

Mikidi was the first to arrive, as usual. Close to the shore a nice, well-behaved little moor-hen was quietly swimming about. Mikidi approached it with infinite precaution. First he paddled, moving more and more slowly, then took his sculls to get the kayak into position. Slowly, deliberately, he took aim, whilst all the time the little moor-hen, paying no attention whatever to him, continued to dip its beak in the water on this side and that, swimming nearer and nearer. Having taken a long aim, Mikidi fired—and missed. On the surface of the water there was nothing to

be seen but two ever widening circles—one made by the bullet, the other by the bird which had just dived.

Without uttering a word, but with a broad grin on his face, Mikidi came alongside a rock, put his gloves down behind him, and stepped out of the kayak. When it had been landed, the skin apron folded and laid in the tent opening, the gun taken from its cover, and the point of the harpoon removed, then, and only then, Mikidi said to me:

'Kristian has killed an anek.'<sup>1</sup>

'And you—how many seals did you kill?'

With a modest gesture, he brought his hand to the level of his chest, displaying an open palm.

'And Kristian?'

He held up four fingers.

'And Odarpi?'

He lifted two fingers and added:

'Yes, but they are very small ones.'

Mikidi took up by the tip of its wing a moor-hen which was lying in the kayak, and held it out to his son Azak.

'A dear little moor-hen,' Azak said, digging his little finger into its eyes.

He had barely taken hold of it when one of the small puppies which was prowling about there, seized it and fled. Azak set up a howl, principally on account of the loss, though the fact of the puppy's teeth having lightly touched his hand was also a little responsible for the outbreak. Paoda and Mikidi hustled round him and gave him back the moor-hen, which the puppy had quickly dropped on seeing the human rabble which hurled itself upon him.

But all around were knitted brows and solemn faces.

'Who bit him?'

'One of Odarpi's puppies,' Mikidi said.

'A puppy of Odarpi's has bitten Azak,' Tipou cried out from the door of the hut.

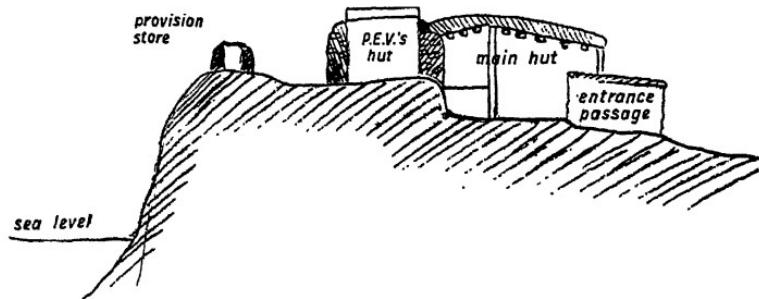
'A puppy of Odarpi's has bitten Azak,' Kerta repeated within the hut, whither Tigayet had gone to feed Tabita

<sup>1</sup> A hooded seal of large dimensions.

who was howling. Tigayet at once laid Tabita aside, despite a fresh outbreak of squalls; and, regardless of an uncovered breast which was jolted and shaken outside her jersey, came rushing up to join the others.

A volley of words poured from her as she turned her attentions to Paoda, Mikidi, and Azak.

'What's this I hear? One of Odarpi's dogs has bitten Azak? Azak has been bitten by one of Odarpi's dogs? The brute! Poor little finger! That mad dog again!'



All of a sudden the whirlwind ceased. Tigayet began running, running on those short legs of hers, which gave her the appearance of a church bell in action, making for the little puppy which had so grievously sinned, and which had long since resumed its games with the others. She seized it, threw it in the air, threw it on the ground, kicked it, grasped its ears in both hands, dashed its head on the ground, and stepped on it.

Squealing with terror, at the first moment possible the little creature took refuge from the cataclysm, and ran and hid itself beneath an upturned pail.

Tigayet was satisfied; she had shewn that she would never tolerate such shocking behaviour.

One by one the whole company, including Tekri crawling along on his hands, arrived and entered my hutch to see how the work had progressed. Immediately, a chorus of exclamations arose, of the most varied nature.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Exclamations of surprise combined with admiration – and untranslatable.

'Kagagatsá!' Kristian cried.

'Tsiwâyounâ!' cried Mikidi.

'Ingatâyrâ!' Odarpi exclaimed.

Each one then proceeded to seat himself at an imaginary table, saying:

'This is the corner where I shall write.'

This evening all the ounakrit were lighted and every bowl filled with seal's meat.

The yellow, vivid light from the lamps cast an almost blinding glare on each naked breast. Every head was in shadow, and from time to time one saw the glint of eyes or teeth.

Little Ogui was crying out with the full strength of his lungs:

'Noudiarma! Wife!'

This was his mode of addressing his little cousin Patsiba.

Ogui was in fact also known as Kridertanidik,<sup>1</sup> the name of Odarpi's father, and Patsiba as Pekrorniet,<sup>2</sup> Odarpi's mother's name. And thus it was that, through these names, Ogui and Patsiba were husband and wife.

Kranorsouak, after a day of howling and general restlessness, was suffering severely from thirst. I took him this evening to a small pool of water before chaining him up for the night by my tent. He drank greedily. With his feet buried in the mire, he trampled on it with a slow, gentle action which recalled his movements when he was a puppy refreshing himself at the maternal fount.

*Tuesday, 29th September, 1936.*

Rain and fog.

A few days previously I had asked Kara her mother's name.

'Martina,' she replied at once.

<sup>1</sup> He who wears a chignon.

<sup>2</sup> The fussy woman.

'And what was her name before she was baptised?'

Kara was silent. She pondered a moment, and then said:

'I don't know. I've forgotten.'

Yesterday I learned of the name I wished to know, and this morning, curious to see how she would react, I said to her:

'Yesterday I heard what your mother's name was formerly. It was "Pekrorniet", wasn't it?'

'Yes,' she replied, 'that was it.'

'Say it, will you? I should like to know how to pronounce it.'

'You pronounce it very well,' she answered.

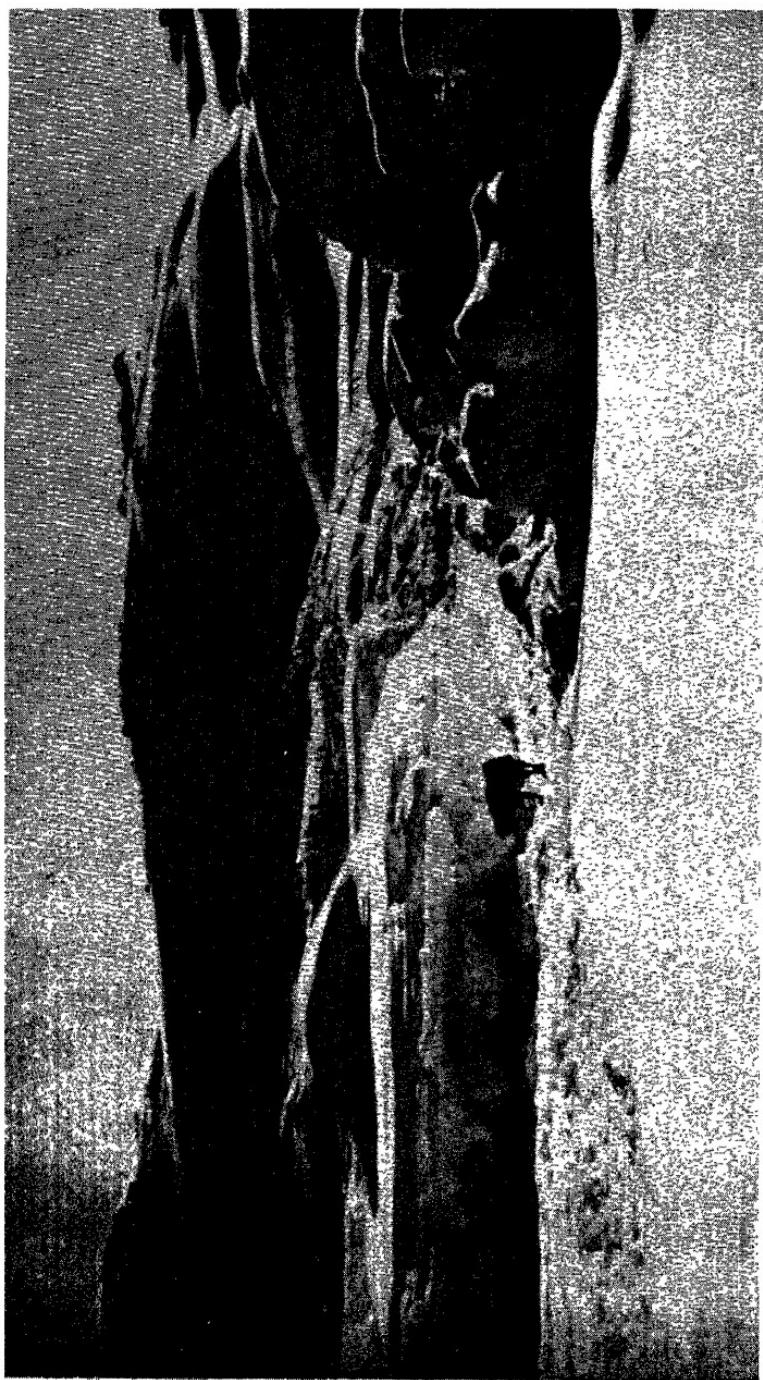
But Doumidia pouted.<sup>1</sup>

Kristian gave me one of his codfish, and I hung it up to dry. The head would be reserved for Doumidia; the remainder had been long since devoured by Ekridi and Timertsit.

Timertsit was stretched out in the passageway leading to my tent, asleep, when I suddenly heard suspicious noises. Timertsit was standing up with her legs stiffened, her tail rigid, on the point of vomiting. I was just in time to push her outside.

On a completely bare stone a huge portion of fish lay spread out; there were ten or fifteen vertebrae with their accompanying bones. Timertsit gazed at it, sniffed at it; then, with the tip of her muzzle, she covered it over carefully with . . . nothing at all, for there was nothing on the stone. She then returned and laid herself down at the entrance to the tent with an easy mind, knowing quite well that, as soon as she should feel a fancy for it, she could safely count on finding the portion of fish which she had so 'carefully hidden'.

<sup>1</sup> An Eskimo will never utter the name of one who is dead, especially if it be that of a near relation. Nowadays, with the influence of Christianity, the younger generation is beginning to disregard this taboo.



THE HUT WITH COVERING OF SNOW



She had barely closed her eyes when Itlouwinak had already swallowed it.

Ekridi came to pay me a visit. Sitting at the entrance of my tent, and on her best behaviour, she was waiting until I called her; only then would she come in. Lying on her back with her legs apart, she was imploring me to stroke her stomach. She raised her head, lowered her ears, stretched her muzzle towards my nose, and then emitted a violent eructation, which was followed by the same suspicious noises as those which I had heard a short time before.

Cod appears to be difficult to digest.



Yoanna told us how she had seen an iceberg fall from the sky.

It was near Kulusuk. They had all been there in the tent—her parents, her brothers and sisters, and herself. She was not quite ten years old.<sup>1</sup>

‘And it turned round and round and round in the sky,’ Yoanna told us.

<sup>1</sup> This incident took place, therefore, about 1895.

With violent and unrestrained movements she waved her arms high above the level of her shoulders, her eyes blinking and cast up to heaven. With puckered brow and eyebrows raised, she mimed the whole scene.

'We were very frightened. So we all shouted, and shouted, and shouted, and it came nearer and nearer the tent, twisting and turning all the time.'

Her face bore an expression of extreme terror. Her hands, as she hid her eyes behind them, were trembling.

'We shouted as loud as we could, and then it fell on the other side of Kulusuk. The kayaks went over there and brought back pieces of it.'

'It was all ice, just like the ice on the fjord. It melted in the heat inside the hut just like ice.'

'The thing that fell down was as big as an iceberg.'

Kridertanidik (he who wears a chignon), Kara's father, was one of the most respected and influential of all the hunters in the district. This was due to his great height and prodigious strength; he could launch an umiak by himself, without assistance. His hair, worn in the fashion of ancient times, was uncut and reached to his shoulders. His hands were 'as big as the hands of the Kratouna'.

'One night,' Kara told us, 'he was asleep with Odarpi on his right arm. Suddenly he felt a violent tugging at his hair, as though someone were trying to pull him off the platform. He slowly lifted up his left hand, which was free, and then, suddenly, he brought it heavily down on the hand which was pulling at him. That hand was as tiny as a child's. He caught it by the tips of its fingers and drew it towards him - drew it hard, hard.'

'He managed from the very first to drag it towards him. But very soon he felt breaths, several breaths, falling on that hand. Then the hand got heavier and heavier, and stronger and stronger. So Kridertanidik thought he had better make use of his other hand; but he couldn't manage to get it free from Odarpi. Then the little hand slid away and everything was quiet again:

'It was just another tara-wetsiak.'

In other words, one of those tiny creatures resembling a child of five years old, who live in the hills and are gifted with extraordinary powers of magic.

Kristian said to me:

'How much paper do you think you will cover during this long winter of ours, if you are going to note down all we tell you? And there are many, many stories we shall tell you. But you too will have to tell us about your own country, and other countries, and the black men, and all the other peoples, and we shall write it all down too.'

Yes, well . . . it's all ethnography, after all.

Yamasi's family shared a hut with Kara's, at Oumivik in the South.

'The eldest was Nigadiousi, Ndia's husband,' Kara was saying.

'Then there was Adou, from Ikatek.'

'And Yamesi himself.'

'After him, his mother had twins, a boy and a girl. The girl was born dead, but the boy was a fine strong baby. One of the men who lived in the hut said that when twins are born and one of them is dead, the other should be buried with him. And the father of the twins said the same thing. So they tied them up both together in the same Kra and laid them in an old tomb that was full of dead people's bones, and covered them up with big stones. The boy lived till the next day, when he died of cold. They heard his cries all night long.'

'To relieve herself, the mother had to give the breast to Yamesi, who was already quite a big boy.'

'Then, after these twins, she had three more children all born dead, because "they had buried one alive".'

Kara, who was then a young girl, and her friend Odîné went out one night, at Oumivik, to fetch water from the mountain torrent. On their way back their attention was suddenly drawn to an enormous block of ice, almost the

size of an iceberg, which was slowly moving along in the midst of the other ice blocks on the fjord, which themselves remained motionless: it was a huge conglomeration, white in colour, nearly phosphorescent, and seemed almost as though it were alive. Whilst Odiné, transfixed with terror, was rooted to the spot, Kara hastened with all speed to the hut to tell the others what they had seen. Some men went out immediately with their guns. But the weird phenomenon had already disappeared ‘underground, beneath the hut’.

‘It was one of those ice-monsters, one of those “poubik” which fall on houses and crush them to pieces. . . .’

I had certainly earned some sleep; it was three o’clock in the morning, and my hurricane lamp was beginning to flicker. Doumidia, in her sleeping-bag, had been in the land of dreams for more than four hours past, lying curled up amid the surrounding shadows, her head buried in the bag. Kara’s stories must have frightened her.

*Wednesday, 30th September 1936.*  
350 votes to 221 in favour of devaluation.

(Press extract added in December 1937)

Torrential rain.

The tent was surrounded by a lake. I felt like one of those poor devils for whom a boat is sent out to search when the Seine is in flood.

The window platform in the hut – the one, in fact, where my own corner was situated – looked like a washing plank in its pail of water. Its other two occupants had migrated; Doumidia to her mother’s platform, and Yosepi to join Gaba and Tekra.

‘You don’t feel sad, all alone in your tent?’ Doumidia asked me to-day.

### CHAPTER III

## NARROW QUARTERS

*Thursday, 1st October, 1936.*

Sky overcast, but no rain.

With Kristian's assistance, I installed my belongings in my little hut: the bench where my guests would sit; my 'writing-table' opposite the window; my 'workshop-cum-carpenter's bench', and my 'kitchen'. Over the bench for my guests I spread skins of dogs and sealskins, which I also hung up all round the hut, with my guns suspended over them; and with Kara's help I carried over some of my papers in order to dry them.

Next, I hung up the saucepans. Having cast a critical eye on these (but for a few moments only, for I felt myself being rapidly won over to the 'office' element of the hut), I took down some and put others in their place, to get a better balanced picture.

Then, suddenly, as I was bending my head forward to judge better of the effect, I felt a drop fall on my neck; and just above me, that is to say, exactly where the tip of my nose would come when I raised my head (the hut being five feet ten inches from floor to ceiling, and my own height about one inch less), a second drop was forming between two of the ceiling planks. The rain had begun again.

The 'kitchen' and 'drawing-room' (bench for my guests) elements having been satisfactorily achieved, I proceeded to hang up the tools in the 'workshop'. All along the planks, long trails of damp betrayed the fact that the roof was not very water-tight. I hammered in nails, whistling a tune as I did so, and entirely disregarding the drops which continued to fall in ever-increasing numbers. But it was

not long before I let fly a resounding 'Damn': a puddle which must have formed between the planks of the roof had just emptied itself brutally from between two fissures, and the resulting waterfall had made unerring aim at the opening left between my pullover, my shirt, and my neck. I felt the water calmly and gently making its way down the whole length of my back.

This could not go on. Nails planted in the ceiling, and an empty canister attached to each, to catch the water which fell from the various cracks, provided a temporary insurance against catastrophe. But I had only fallen from the frying-pan into the fire. I could no longer move unless I were almost bent double. As soon as I stood up to rest my poor weary back, I collided with a meat tin already three-quarters filled with water, and I upset the contents, nearly always over myself.

The hut now looked as though it were lived in.



I sat at my table and wrote. I was obliged to sit askew in order to allow those drops, which seemed to have such a grudge against me, to pass me with exact precision, by a hair's breadth, as in fencing. No sooner did I fix up a fresh canister amongst the others, put my seat in place again, sit down square with the table, than drops were falling on my paper: the tin must have frightened them, for they had simply altered their direction and started falling from another spot. . . .

But from those drops which my array of tins received, there came a charming accompaniment of music to this trickling deluge: each tin sang in concert with its neighbour. From time to time a tin would overflow and its water pour down at random on my paper, on the salt, or anywhere else its fancy prompted.

Tired out by this game of outwitting drops, I went to bed at nine o'clock. Not a square inch remained anywhere that was still dry, with the exception of part of the bench on which my sleeping-bag was laid out. The bag was damp and cold. But the sealskins by which I was surrounded, my two guns hanging up by my side, the tools, the saucepans, the canisters, the twinkling of the drops and the music they made – all this brought a feeling of comfort and joy to my heart.

Outside, sea and wind alike were raging. As each wave surged upwards, I heard it roaring along the edges of the little bay with its rugged inlets which opened out within the roadstead, just below the hut; and clinging, even as it receded, with might and main to the rocks and pebbles on the shore.

I blew out my lamp.

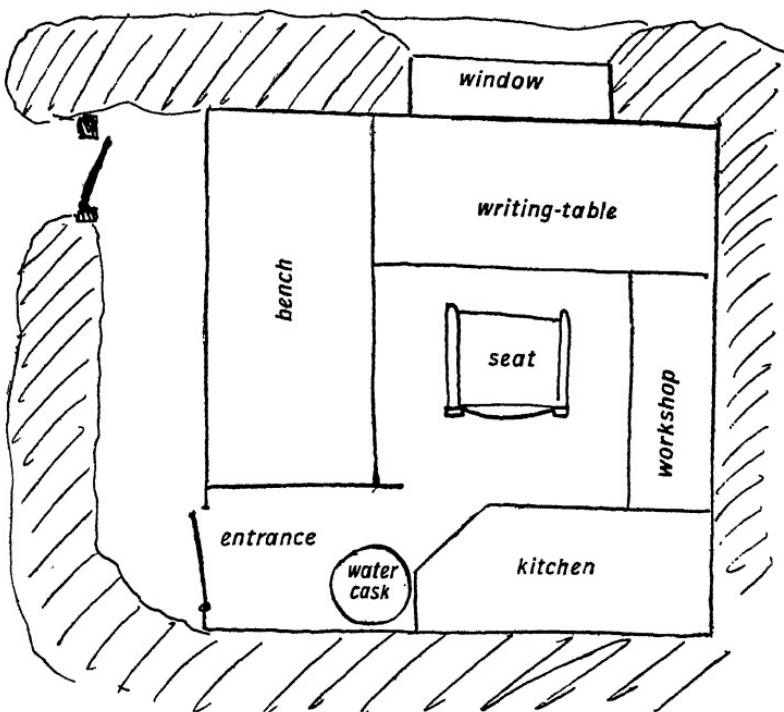
*Friday, 2nd October, 1936.*

*5 o'clock in the morning.* Kara was outside my window, calling out to me with the full force of her lungs: but I could hardly hear her voice above the wild beating of the rain and the booming roar of wind and waves.

I dashed outside in my pyjamas. There was a dense mist and daylight had hardly begun to appear. Kara, looking as wild and dishevelled as an old witch, pointed out to me in the middle of the little bay, which was surrounded by floating ice, fragments of planks, and refuse of all sorts, one of my petrol-cans, the black top of which appeared at intervals above the surface. Farther out another one, carried along by the wind and the current, was taking its departure for good and all.

I dashed back into the hut and drew on my trousers.

They were wet. I sat down on the reindeer skin; that was wet also. Water had been falling all night through a small gap in the ceiling, and the catastrophe had extended as far as my bench.



Armed with a long pole and a line for cod-fishing, I tried in vain to secure the can, which amid foaming waves was gradually making for the open sea. After an hour's struggle I gave up hope. The can had quite definitely gone off and joined its companion. Should I ever see it again? . . . Out of eight that I had, two had now taken their departure. I found a third at the foot of the big rock near which we hung bears' skins; it had been cast up by the sea at that spot, a hundred yards and more from the place where I had put it.

The situation having become impossible in the hut, I went back to the tent. Having folded it and then set it up again in a comparatively sheltered spot, the sight of the skins as they lay spread out on the floor, and an irresistible feeling that my tent was in some way an old friend, were a source of real joy to me.



I have already remarked that what one misses in a tent is a view from a window. But the tent has one quality which is an ample compensation for this defect; and that is its brightness. It catches every morsel of daylight.

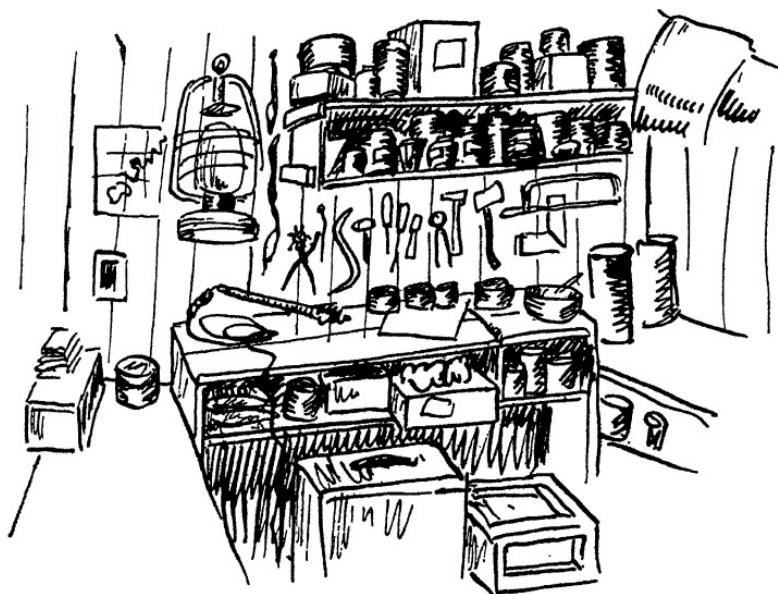
"The winter has not been a long one for you," Doumidia said to me.

5 p.m. Having succeeded to a certain extent in repairing the roof of my hutch during a short break in the foul weather, and verified that the gutters had not entirely disappeared, I put the interior to rights once more.

<sup>1</sup> To live in a hut typifies winter. To live in a tent is an essential characteristic of summer.

'The summer has not been a long one for you,' Doumidia remarked to me.

Kranorsouak developed a streak of cunning. He discovered that by dragging at his chain it sometimes gave way. To his howling, and pawing at the ground, he had



added the following plan of action. Growling as he did so, he would take a few steps backwards and then dart forward; then, as soon as the chain was stretched to its full length, he would hurl himself violently into the air, thus turning a complete somersault and falling to earth half-strangled and very nearly dead. After taking some time for recovery, he would start these exploits and evolutions all over again.

I ended by taking pity on him and letting him loose.

This evening I found him dripping with water and covered with mud from head to foot, lying on the half-finished wall of the hut, just beneath my window, with his

head beyond the partition which separates my bench from the outer air.

Kriwi had placed her head on the knees of little Tou-goutanngâ, Kristian's daughter. She was stroking Kriwi's hair; and each time that she found a louse she took it up and crushed it between her teeth.

'I'm jealous,' Tou-goutanngâ said to me.

'Why?'

'Because I'm fond of you.'

She was twelve years old.

A few hours later, when I went to see what game she and her companions were playing, she addressed me again:

'I am a lucky girl.'

'Why?'

'Because, now, *you* are fond of *me*.'

Raining in torrents.

I have written this already several times; but I have got to do so again.

*Saturday, 3rd October, 1936.*

The weather was even worse than yesterday. The sea raged more furiously, the rain was still more drenching, the wind more violent.

Low-lying, black clouds were driven in procession over a sea that was of a vivid emerald green, with a dark and heavy background. The icebergs, dead white, stood out from the scene, with an air of ghostly unreality about them.

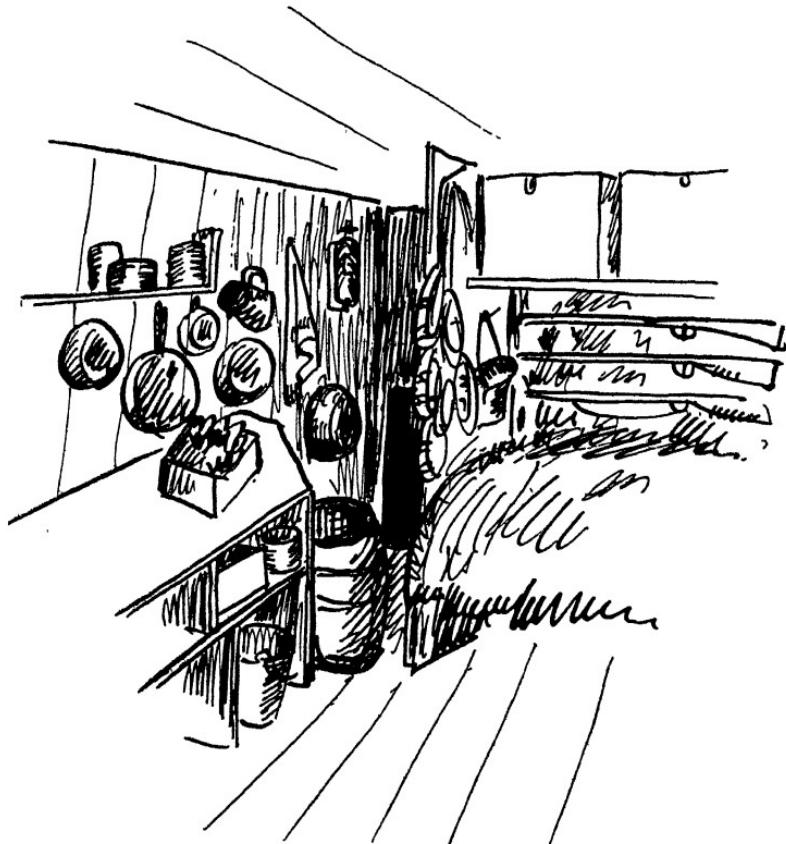
This evening, on the window platform, all the children, seven of them completely naked, were seated in a row. Each one had a little book before him, and Kristian was making them read in turn.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At Tasissaq, the Danish station of the Angmagssalik district, there is a schoolmaster, a civilised Eskimo from the West coast of Greenland. In all the other groups (whether they include a single hut or ten) there is a man who conscientiously fulfils a schoolmaster's duties and teaches the children to read and write. The extraordinary result of this is that the Eskimo of Angmagssalik, discovered about fifty years ago and now numbering about one thousand, are one of those peoples amongst whom the smallest percentage of illiterates is to be found of any in the world.

*Sunday, 4th October, 1936.*

The vile weather still continued.

9 o'clock. Tipou and Tadâ – each of them is ten years old – came and paid me a visit. Their pretty little faces were well washed and perfectly clean, and their hair well



combed. But their knees were dirty; and on moving their dresses slightly aside over their shoulders, a layer of dirt was revealed. Thereupon I hastened to boil water and get out soap and towels, with both children watching me, a little nervous and apprehensive.

With Doumidia's help, I then proceeded to wash Tipou. At first she was loth to take off her dress, and then

insisted on keeping on her breeches, which were black with dirt. I scrubbed her vigorously until her body was white and clean, except, of course, that portion of it which was concealed by her breeches, from which she refused to part. Then it was Tadá's turn. Though much the more timid of the two, she made no bones about undressing completely.

The water was black, the towels were black; but the two children were clean.

In the drenching rain which still continued to fall, I covered the roof with every kind of waterproof material I could collect, tarpaulins, ground-sheets, etc. It no longer leaked, but as the walls were still unfinished the damp continued to ooze through the planks in trickling streamlets.

This morning several wild duck (*nertit*) alighted there – a proceeding which proved fatal to them.

Mikidi, seeing one of them in my hut, said to me: 'You see, that bird is a second cousin of the sparrow, just as the bear is second cousin to the hooded seal.'

In former times, before midwives were supplied by the Danes, the woman who undertook the delivery was more or less a specialist. It was she who 'baptised' the child. Between the thumb and forefinger of her right hand she would take the little finger of the child's left hand if it were a boy, the forefinger if a girl, and say: 'This will be your name.' Then she would murmur indistinctly in the child's ear all the names of people (usually of the child's family) who had lately died, both men and women. This practice is still maintained. But since there has been a pastor, the woman, instead of taking the child's little finger, merely puts her hand on its head.

The custom by which children take at birth the names of people lately deceased (generally of their own family) also survives at the present day; and there are no instances of children bearing the names of living persons. A certain number, only, of the names thus bestowed are officially

assigned to the children by the pastor at their baptism; they are then duly inscribed in the Danish records.

The word 'adek' (name) bears almost the same significance for the Eskimo as the word 'soul' for us.

In bygone days, the Eskimo believed in the existence of three kinds of souls.

First, the soul of Life, which had its seat at the base of the neck.

Secondly, the soul of Sleep, which had its seat in the side, under the diaphragm.

Thirdly, a great number of little souls, each one residing in one of the joints of the body.

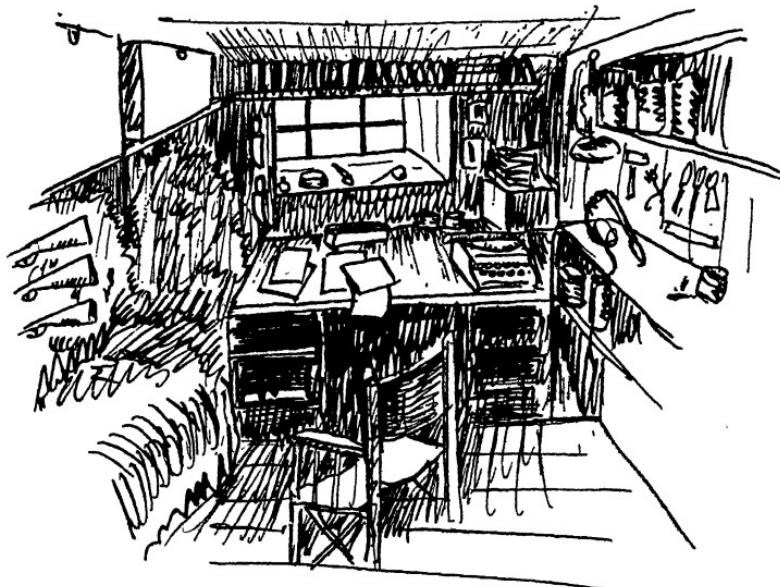
When the soul left the body, death ensued. This soul, at the moment of passing, was always accompanied by the 'name' (adek). The latter no sooner left the body than it felt cold and began to shiver. When this name was spoken in the ear of a new-born child, the 'adek' answered the call and made haste to enter the child's body through the opening intended for that purpose – the anus, and quickly made its way to a warm and comfortable lodging at the base of the neck, alongside the soul of Life.

If during the earlier years of its life the child was ill-treated by its parents, the 'adek' thereupon fled and left the child's body, thus exposing the child to a lingering death. In such cases the only available expedient was an appeal to the angakout, who, through the medium of the spirits, prevailed on the 'name' to return. The latter then went back to his warm and pleasant lodging by the usual means of access.

During all this time, the Life-soul of the dead man continued to enjoy a life in some respects identical with that of the living: in the sea or in the air there were whole villages of tents in which the soul continued to live, and even to procreate, in human form.

The Sleep-soul induces sleep in the very act of leaving the body; and this explains why a sleeper should never be roughly awakened. And if certain people, when they wake, utter incoherent words or show signs of violence, it is be-

cause the Sleep-soul has not yet returned to its dwelling-place. The Sleep-soul, too, comes in and goes out through the anus, the door for the souls.



Lastly, when one of the little souls which live in the joints leaves the body, its departure brings illness and pain. Recourse is then had to the angakout who, by means of innumerable tricks and devices, proceed to search for the soul which has fled. In the majority of cases a spirit finds it, encloses it in both hands as it would a little bird, brings it back, and sets it free to return to the body which was its former home.

Doumidia was also called Iakra; and thereby hangs a strange tale.

Nineteen years previously, Kara was at Ikateq and expecting Doumidia's arrival. One night she dreamed that she saw a man coming through the wall at the end of the

hut<sup>1</sup> whose name was Iakra. It was a young man who was living at that time at Oumivik. In Kara's dream, the ghost of Iakra sat down beside her, and said:

'I have come to tell you that I am dead.'

Then Kara, still dreaming and very frightened, tried to make her way into the next compartment<sup>2</sup> of the platform. But Iakra began speaking again, and told her that he wished her no harm; all he wanted was to tell her how he had died.

'I went off in a kayak, and the sea was rough. There were big waves, but I went off all the same. As soon as I had started I was caught by a wave that came rolling towards me, and then a piece of ice overturned the kayak. After that I went to sleep and I died. Before I started, my wife had given me a piece of raw meat to eat. I saw that it was raw, but I ate it all the same. You know that I don't like raw meat, but still I ate it. Then my wife said to me: "Why do you eat meat that is nearly raw?" and I answered, "I don't know. But it doesn't matter. I shall eat no more meat." Then I went off, and I died.'

At that moment Kara had awakened. And when Doumidia was born, one of the names she gave her was Iakra.

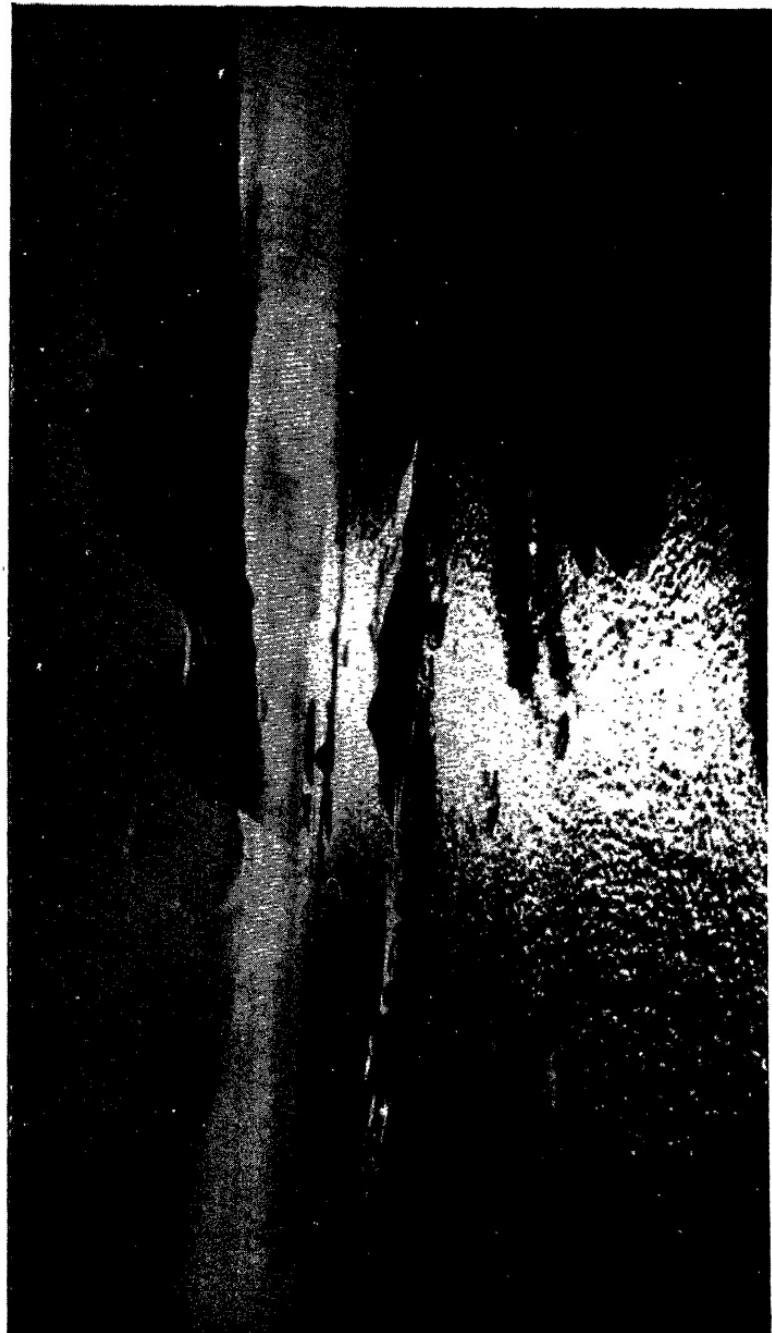
On the return of summer several months later, the oumiaks came back, and kayaks put out to meet them. All the people in the oumiaks were weeping, and the men in the kayaks which were accompanying them were silent.

'It was then that we knew that someone had died,' Kara told us. 'So we asked who it was, and they answered "Her husband," pointing at Kristina. And that was how it was that we knew that Iakra had really and truly come and visited me.'

Later, I said to Kristina, pointing to Doumidia: 'You know she has the same name as he?' Then Kristina asked

<sup>1</sup> The part of the platform which lies nearest to the wall is called the *Kidi*, and is the resort of all kinds of frightful monsters. Only monsters, the dead, and the angakout have the power of entering houses by the *Kidi*.

<sup>2</sup> Each family has a separate compartment on the platform which is known as an *itek*. The separation between each compartment is usually marked by a sealskin raised about 8 inches only, and attached by straps to the beams of the roof.



THE FJORD



me how I knew. So I told her, and to everything I said she answered 'Yes'.

'He died through being struck by a wave and his kayak being overturned by a piece of ice, and his companions had fished him up by throwing a stone fixed to a thong, over the kayak.'

I asked Doumidia why Iakra had said that he would eat no more meat. Did he really wish to die?

'No,' she replied, 'but there are some people who, when they are going to die, know they are going to die.'

Kriwi, having sucked and licked the head of the haddock which Kristian had caught, hung it up by a string to one of the beams of the roof. I asked Kriwi why he did so.

'It's to make something which tells you the weather.'

'Something which tells the weather? How can it do that?'

'When the wind comes from the North, it turns to the North; and when it comes from the South it turns to the South.'

'And you hang it up indoors?'

'Yes, of course we do.'

Finding this hard to believe, I turned round to Kristian, Odarpi, and Mikidi. Kristian smiled, and said:

'You are a Kratouna. You can't understand.'

Whilst I was engaged in writing, I heard someone carefully scraping her feet outside my entrance, and then trying to enter as quietly as possible.

It was Yoanna. 'I have come to pay you a visit,' she said.

I could not see her, for she was standing upright behind the planks which left a small opening, a sort of tiny entrance, by the foot of my bench. I invited her to come in, and she then came forward, bent almost double, sat down and folded her hands, and heaved a deep sigh.

'Yâa! they're making too much noise over there. They're

pretending to dance like the Kratouna, and it makes too much noise.'

I offered her a cigar and, following the usual custom, said to her:

'Now tell me something. Talk away.'

'Yes, yes, and you must tell me some tales, too. Go on,' she replied—also in accordance with custom. Then for a few moments she remained silent, deposited a small flow of saliva on the tip of her cigar, lighted it to an accompaniment of large gulps, repeated the operation of damping it, and then, in a loud and rather portentous tone of voice, she said:

'I am going to tell you something. I am going to tell you a story.

'Near Kulusuk, there is a hill covered with bilberries which is called "Erniwi" (the place where one brings to birth), because once upon a time a woman went there three times all alone for that. A little girl and her younger sister were gathering bilberries, and the elder one looked up and saw, quite near, something that looked like a big bear coming slowly towards her. She jogged her sister's elbow and whispered: "That looks like a bear." "Yes, but look at his patch," the other one answered. And it did look like a bear; but it had a black patch on its side, and when it moved along it was buried in the ground half-way up its legs, as if the earth was quite soft. So they knew then that it was a toupidek. So they went down to the edge of the water to hide, and when they got there the younger child said to the elder one:

"Have you got an incantation?"

"Yes. Have you?"

"I've got one here," the younger one answered, touching her head.

"Go on, then! Let's have it."

"Yââ, yââ, I am hiding, I am hiding. Yââ, yââ, half-way across the strand.<sup>1</sup> Yââ, yââ, I am hiding, I am hiding."

<sup>1</sup> The child was referring to the space on the seashore which is left uncovered between low and high tides.

'Then they went back; and as soon as they got home, they told their grandfather that they had seen a huge white animal.

"A big bear!" the grandfather cried out, right in the middle of the large hut where they all lived. Then everyone shouted out: "A lovely big bear! A lovely big bear!"

"Then the hunters got ready to go out, but the children said:

"It had a big black patch on its side, and its legs were half buried in the ground." Then the grandfather cried out: "A nasty big toupidek, a nasty big toupidek!" And then everyone in the hut shouted the same thing as he did.'

For some hours past I had been noticing a frown on Doumidia's face, and that she had ceased speaking to me.

'What is the matter?' I asked her. 'With that frown of yours, you look like a black woman.'

'And Kriwi - she looks like a Kratouna,' Doumidia replied.

Kriwi was lying at full length on the platform, half naked, and leaning with both elbows on her pillow of folded sealskins. She held a copy of the New Testament, revised, corrected, and simplified for the use of the Eskimo.<sup>1</sup> Yoanna, perspiring the while, was bending over her and reading.

I went up to them. She was reading aloud, with neither hesitation nor stammering, and far more intelligently than Kristian and Odarpi when they take the service on Sundays. Occasionally, but seldom, Kriwi had to help her out.

I was amazed. And when she had finished I told her how clever she was.

'Why?' she asked me, with rather a roguish look.

'Because you read well. When did you learn to read?'

'I never learned to read.'

<sup>1</sup> The Eskimo of Angmagssalik, who were converted to Christianity thirty years ago, have the use of a few books published in the Eskimo language of the West coast, which differs as much from that of the East coast as Italian from French.

'Well?'

'I don't read, I say it by heart. I have heard that twice. . . .'

Tougoutanngâ was making a systematic and thorough investigation of Kriwi's hair.

'Lice?' I asked.

'Pakati, pakati (they are fighting),' was the reply.

9 p.m. While I was writing, Doumidia took my hand, laid it out flat on my table, placed her own over mine, and said:

'I've got delicate, pretty hands.'

*Tuesday, 6th October, 1936.*

The snow was approaching and would soon be upon us. All the mountain tops were white.

It is said of an Eskimo whose ears have long lobes that he is stingy with his presents of food.

As I was drawing a map of the district to pin on the wall, Mikidi took my bottle of Chinese ink, looked at it, sniffed it, and said:

'I have ink like that too, but it is better ink.' Observing my astonishment, he added: 'Yes, it's red.'

Ekridi and Timertsit wanted to go out. Sitting on their hindquarters by the door, they were plainly asking me to open it. Their appeal was reinforced by two or three short whines; then they waited.

The rain was still falling as though it would never cease. Several minutes had passed, when I heard renewed scratching at the door. This was Ekridi who, disgusted at having got wet, was asking to be let in again. She was drenched, and had hiccups. I dried and rubbed her with a dishcloth. She stretched her head out for me to dry it, a model of docility and good behaviour.

Little Tsetay was walking about on the platform stark naked, proud of being able to show off the two strings of beads which encircled her arms. Tigayet had just strung them for her, following the example of Yoanna, who had done the same for Kerta the day before. A few days earlier I had remarked that the children looked prettier with this adornment.

Things were coming on. They were indeed!

Little Kerti, quite naked, was sitting at the back of the platform; and seated quietly in a row facing him were all the other children, also naked. From Kerti's throat there came forth a series of monotonous and perfectly identical sounds. His eyes were cast down, his mouth drooped. From time to time he paused to take breath; and so the litany went on its way.

He was imitating the 'Padasi', the pastor.

Sealskin thongs were stretched horizontally from end to end of the hut, in front of the platforms; five of them in all, firmly attached to the beams of the roof.

'Atsinârata,'<sup>1</sup> Odarpi said to me.

It was very warm in the hut, and we were all naked to the waist; the majority of the oil lamps were burning, and in the heavy, overheated atmosphere they cast a vivid glow amid the obscurity that prevailed within.

In a leisurely manner Odarpi went up to the thongs. Standing opposite the entrance passage, he took them in his hands, with one hand turned outwards and the other inwards. Slowly he lifted himself up by his arms, raised his knees, swayed once or twice, and then, with a violent effort, heaved himself over the thongs and fell lightly on his feet on the other side. Releasing the thongs, he made his way slowly back to a corner of the hut, bent double, and holding his side as though he were in great pain.

'Tss! Tss!' he said, but this was merely to save appearances. His eyes sparkled with pleasure at his own success.

<sup>1</sup> A sort of pliant trapeze made of sealskin thongs.

After a considerable interval, Mikidi next came forward, but with an evident lack of self-confidence.

He laid careful hold on the thongs, swayed a little, and then, after making an intense effort, received the thongs full in his chest and collapsed violently on his back in the midst of the mud, on the wet and dirty flagstones. Shouts of laughter arose, of which Mikidi's were the loudest.

This merriment was entirely free from malice. No one was making game of him; they merely saw the funny side of the whole performance, and there was no further thought in their minds.



In the meantime, whilst the children were playing and raising a great din, Yoanna sewing, Paoda doing embroidery, and Tougotanngâ re-lighting the ounakrit, Odarpi slowly approached the thongs for the second time. He passed two of them behind the nape of his neck, grasping the other three firmly. Then, suddenly, with a rapid swaying movement of his body, he lifted himself by a series of small jerks between the two lines of thongs, and swung himself slowly round the hut. He then turned to me with a broad grin on his face and said to me, scratching his chest:

'Oh! what fun it is!'

Inero had contrived to slip his collar, and had broken loose. With an aggressive air he approached my dear old Oukiok, who was chained up near by. Oukiok looked at him, and with a fierce and tremendous growl, issued the necessary warning. But Inero was not to be deterred by this, and drew nearer and nearer. Within the space of a second he lay stretched upon the ground, pleading for mercy. No sooner had this happened than Oukiok completely disregarded him, turned away, and calmly lifted a leg against the stone to which he was tied up.

Kranorsouak had disappeared for the past two days. He had found a substitute for the unhappy love which he bore towards myself, namely, Waps and her two puppies. He had lain the whole day long by the rocks where they were installed; and at times, when Waps was not there, he had buried himself in their retreat and allowed himself to be nibbled by them without stirring an inch.

*Wednesday, 7th October, 1936.*

First appearance of Tino Rossi at  
the Casino de Paris.

Summer-time in France.

'Corrida' wins the Grand Prix  
de l'Arc du Triomphe.

Six days' cycle race in full swing.

(Press extracts added in December 1937)

I had a dream. . . .

I was at a window on the topmost floor of a large house, in front of which there lay a wide, open terrace. On this terrace I saw coming towards me, swimming, a seal, with his head projecting above the level of the grass, and leaving a furrow behind him as he advanced. The seal dived, and then reappeared nearer the house. At the edge of the paved way, he hoisted himself up as he would on ice and began to climb.

I went back into the room to fetch my gun, and returned to the window. Just as I was making ready to fire, I saw a black dog come out of the house and follow the seal, sniffing. Not wishing to kill the dog, I waited. Thereupon a boy in a felt hat appeared from the house, also carrying a gun; and without leaving the doorway, fired at the seal, went out to fetch it, and brought it back to the house, dragging it behind him and leading his dog on the chain.

*6 o'clock in the morning.* Timertsit was scratching at the door and asking to be let out; she, as well as I, had spent the night in my hut. Without leaving my sleeping-bag, I clutched at the foot of my bench, stretched out the other arm, and managed thus to open the door with the handle of the ladle used for drawing from the cask. Then, with considerable difficulty, I contrived to shut the door again without having to get up.

I removed the white curtain which I pinned over my window every evening, and which was indispensable for keeping out draughts that had already given me a stiff neck.

The sky was blue. A rose-pink tint was already adorning the mountain tops on the other side of the fjord as the sun's rays fell upon them. The weather had completely recovered. With eager haste I got out of my sleeping-bag and, clad only in my pyjamas, hurried outside.

*1.30 p.m.* The sun was already disappearing behind the mountain which lay at the back of our hut. Night would soon be upon us.

If a person who was born in fine weather has hiccups in bad weather, it will soon be fine again.

It is said of an Eskimo whose right side is twitching, that someone is speaking ill of him. If the twitching is on the left side, it means that he will receive a present of food.

When a shark is attracted by some smell and comes to

lie in wait for his prey, he is called Najartek. The same name is also given to a man when, during a season of famine, he enters a house where there is still something left to eat.

Every plank in my hut was oozing with damp. From every nail there hung a drop, reddish in colour; and all my tools were rusty.

8 p.m. I was sitting at the table in my hut, writing. The thermometer registered 50° only, but I had an agreeable sensation of indoor warmth. I heard Timertsit and Ekridi at play behind me. Doumidia, seated on my bench, was making designs for embroidery<sup>1</sup> with coloured chalks, for my better instruction.

There came a violent knocking at the door.

'Yes,' I said.

Nothing stirred. There was complete silence. Then, suddenly, the knocking was resumed with still greater violence.

'Yes, come in.' But there was still not a sound to be heard. To satisfy my curiosity I took my electric lamp and went out to investigate. White patches of ice in the bay, an almost calm sea, a crescent moon, and a somewhat pale aurora borealis – all these I saw. But not a living soul could I discover.

'What is it?' Doumidia asked me.

'Nothing. I've seen nothing at all.'

She looked at me in alarm.

'It may be a Kôpa,'<sup>2</sup> I said.

'Ouma! Be quiet!' she answered, retreating still further into the corner of my bench where the skins made a comfortable nook. She was frightened. A few moments later scratching was heard, growing more and more insistent.

<sup>1</sup> These are embroideries made with small strips of sealskin in bright colours, which are sewn together in small squares to make decorative designs on sealskin boots, waistbelts, etc.

<sup>2</sup> A frightful monster, a mere sight of which may cause death. Generally in human form.

I got up to go and inspect, but Doumidia with a rapid gesture took my arm, drew me towards her, and said:

'Don't go out. We can't tell what it is.'

I went out nevertheless. Between the plank walls of my small dwelling and the walls of the hut, Itlouwinak was lying asleep. From time to time he scratched himself – and this was the origin of the strange noise which we had heard.

'Well?' Doumidia asked me as I came in.

I shrugged my shoulders without replying; whereupon she shuddered and said, in an undertone:

'I shall not go home to-night.'

'But I will come with you. Why are you frightened?'

'Oh, I don't know. It may be a Kôpa, because there are Kôpa which come into houses like that.'

10 p.m. Doumidia was definitely unwilling to return home alone, and I accordingly went with her. As soon as we arrived, she hastened to give a full account of all that had happened. The whole company listened, made various conjectures, and came to the conclusion that it must have been a Kôpa. After being greatly entertained by all this, I told them what I had discovered. Everyone laughed, but Odarpi interrupted them and asked me a question.

'When you came over from the other side, you saw no Timertsit<sup>1</sup> on the big glacier?'

'No, we didn't see any. Are there still some there?'

'Yes, there certainly are; and if you had seen one you would all have been frightened too, just as Doumidia was.'

'Oh, should I?'

'Yes, you would! And he would have eaten you up, and your dogs too.'

Kristian was not quite convinced, and repeated Odarpi's question.

'So really and truly, you saw no Timertsit on your way to the big glacier?'

<sup>1</sup> Giants who inhabit the great ice desert, and carry a whole collection of cooking utensils attached to their jaws.

'No, really, we didn't see any at all.'

'And Knud Rasmussen,' did he see none either?'

*Thursday, 8th October, 1936.*

Doumidia told me how, when she was a little girl, a piece of sugar which someone had given her had lasted for several hours. She had begun by licking it with the tip of her tongue at long intervals to make it last. She had managed in a kind of way to inhale the taste.

For making the roof the entrance to my hut, I utilised all the odd pieces of planking which I still had available; but there were not sufficient. A few days previously, I had lent Odarpi a plank to put against the wall behind his platform; this plank would make up the number I required.

'Go and fetch it, Odarpi,' I said. 'You can put these two smaller planks in its place, and if you fix them together they will answer your purpose quite well.'

Odarpi looked at me, and said:

'Why don't you go yourself?'

'You know perfectly well. I don't want to have any discussion with your wife.'

Odarpi was away for a long while. Mikidi was of opinion that he was in for a bad time, whilst Kristian suggested that Tigayet might already have 'done him in'. At last he returned.

'When I told Tigayet that the French chief preferred not to come and fetch the planks himself, she smiled and was very pleased,' he told us.

Shortly afterwards Tigayet herself appeared, and whilst I was filling in the gaps left between the plank partitions and the walls with dried bush, she crouched on the wall by my side, with frequent smiles that revealed a sad deficiency of teeth.

<sup>1</sup> A Danish explorer who studied the ethnography of a certain number of the Eskimo of Greenland. He spent the summer of 1933 at Angmagsalik, and it was then that he made the beautiful film which appeared in France under the title of *Kayak*. He died in 1934 from intestinal poisoning brought on by eating high seal's meat.

'Wittou, when are you going to give me some beads?'

'When the hut is finished - and if you help me with it.'

'As many as that?' she asked me, with a smile to which the whole of her mouth, her eyes, her forehead, and her cheeks all contributed.

I had intended, as soon as the hut was finally built, to give her a considerably larger quantity. But I had become exasperated by all these airs and graces, and replied:

'No. Three beads the size of your fist, quite black and made of wood.'

All her hopes were dashed to the ground; and as she departed, she turned and hurled the following remark at me over her shoulder:

'You're a horrible man.'

When the distribution of the different parts of a bear or a seal takes place, the allotment of portions is an extraordinarily complicated business. In some cases the poor hunter who has actually slain the animal finds himself left with nothing but the head, the skin, and the entrails.

My notes on this subject, which promised to be a fruitful one, were already becoming voluminous. For the third time, my companions explained to me the mechanism of distribution, which is particularly complicated in cases where a seal has been wounded by two men successively, and finally killed by a third.

I heard sounds of the dogs barking, though faintly and in the distance. These sounds were rapid and abrupt - yelping rather than barking, 'Krididadek' as they are called here, and typical of the dogs when they catch sight of something out of the ordinary of which they are rather frightened or are uncertain of its nature. This yelping is an invariable sequel to the appearance of a bear.

We all remained silent, listening intently. My companions' eyebrows were raised, their heads slowly dropped, their lips fell apart. The chorus of yelping left no further room for doubt. We glanced at each other meaningfully,

and dashed outside. I seized my large electric torch and rushed out.

All the dogs, now enclosed within a circle of light, were yapping with their heads turned towards my tent, which was still set up. Without a moment's delay I shifted the torch round in that direction. In the distance an enormous single eye shone out with conspicuous clearness beneath its rays.

I switched off the light. The darkness which followed was as black as pitch. There were sounds of a cautious helter-skelter towards the big rock.

'Stand by,' I whispered. 'I'm going to light up.' The skin would go to the first man to see the bear. Dead silence followed. Then the light shone out.

At the foot of the large rock where Waps kept her puppies was Kranorsouak, staring at us, and looking rather uneasy.

*Friday, 9th October, 1936.*

Odarpi had opened his case of sugar, and given a handful to each of his children.

'Wittou, that's for you,' Patsiba said to me, handing me a piece of sugar.

'Wittou, that's for you,' Kidimani said to me, making me a similar offer.

'Wittou, that's for you,' Tsetay said, handing me a piece of sugar which she had just been sucking for a considerable time.

The Yaÿwetsiet<sup>1</sup> are little people resembling the Eskimo, dressing like them and living underground. There is a certain number of them of the tiniest proportions, 'no bigger than crows'.

Ptarmigans are regarded by these strange little beings in the same light as bears by ordinary men. The Yaÿwetsiet, several at a time, attack them with lances.

The walls of my hut were nearly finished. It was freezing hard, and the sods which I inserted between the

<sup>1</sup> Singular - yaÿwetsiak. Plural - yaÿwetsiet.

stones were as hard as stones themselves. Kara, using my spade, had much difficulty in digging them up, and instead of moulding themselves to the shape of the stones on which I placed them, they remained stiff and unmanageable. A strange cement, indeed.

Of the state of my fingers the less said the better.

I stacked my cakes of Marseilles soap in the 'loft' of my hut, which is no less than eight inches high on one side and two on the other. I then made a general distribution, everyone, grown-ups and children alike, receiving his piece. This evening there were piles of soap all over the hut, and in spite of this my loft was full to bursting.

'If you have no soap to wash yourself with, tell me, and I will give you some,' Doumidia said to me.

This evening Paoda was sewing a white jacket, and Yoanna scraping skins for making a pair of trousers. Jacket and trousers were both for Kristian.

*Saturday, 10th October, 1936.*

Five escaped convicts arrive at Trinidad in a vessel gone adrift.

Fierce battle between Madrid and Toledo.

(Press extracts added in December 1937)

I worked unremittingly at the walls of my hut. My muscles grew stiff, and every moment I wanted to stretch myself or lie down.

Above the low walls of the little entrance there was a sort of natural row of shelves.

'Is that to be for your rolls of paper instead of moss?' Odarpi asked me.

6 p.m. Night had fallen. It was extremely warm in the hut, and only three of the five oil lamps were lighted.

Odarpi, stripped to the waist, was lying flat on his stomach on the platform, and rolling into balls the string which surrounded the cakes of soap. Tigayet, as usual, was busy doing nothing.

Doumidia, sitting on the window platform, was playing with little Tabita who was making grimaces, blowing out her cheeks. She looked a truly comic little creature. Suddenly Doumidia clasped her in her arms and, in a flood of tenderness, hugged her violently, and cried out at the top of her voice:

'Agaymouna!'

Her gesture had been so rapid and so unexpected that Tabita instantly set up a howl.

Mikidi, lying on his stomach alongside Paoda, who was asleep, looked at me and gave me a smile over his arms which were folded in front of him. His and Paoda's bare shoulders supplied the only patch of colour to be seen in the obscurity that prevailed in their compartment on the platform.

Yoanna was also asleep; and all that could be seen of her was the top of her all but bald head, and the tiny, absurd little ball of her chignon, which hung over sideways. By her side, in almost total darkness, the light of her oil lamp being on the point of extinction, Kriwi lay reading.

Tâda was making an inspection of Kara's hair; Kristian removing his shirt before going to bed; whilst Tougotanngâ, sitting cross-legged before her oil lamp, was making her hair into plaits, of which she already had seven or eight around her head.

As I had a great deal of writing to do, I left the hut and returned to my own small dwelling. I was barely outside when the circle of light from my torch revealed a ground white with snow, whilst on my face there fell a steady stream of large white flakes. A wave of joy surged up within me; and I returned and shouted into the hut, along the entrance passage:

'Come along, you people, it's snowing!'

Immediately there was a general rush to see the spectacle, some members of the company being stark naked, and many of them half asleep.

'And there's the dear little winter,' Doumidia said.

Hearing the dogs yelping, Yosepi went out of the hut. It was pitch dark. He could see nothing, but on listening intently he heard a sound of weeping which proceeded from an ancient tomb. He then called for Kriwi and Gâba, and they too could hear sounds of sobbing and tears. They approached the tomb, but immediately they did so the sobbing ceased. As soon as they began to make their way back, it was immediately resumed.

Thereupon each of them went and fetched a piece of fat<sup>1</sup> and threw it in the direction of the tomb; and there and then the sobbing came to an end.

Shortly afterwards Yosepi, wishing to go out again, heard the sobs coming from the same direction.

He would not stir from the hut. . . .

Ekridi and Timertsit were scratching at the door, while Doumidia was seated on the 'kitchen'. She then unhooked a Kamioun,<sup>2</sup> bent down to push the door with this implement, upset the water-jug, knocked over the mirror – which was broken – herself nearly fell into the small cask, and finally, stepped over to the door, there being no other means of closing it.

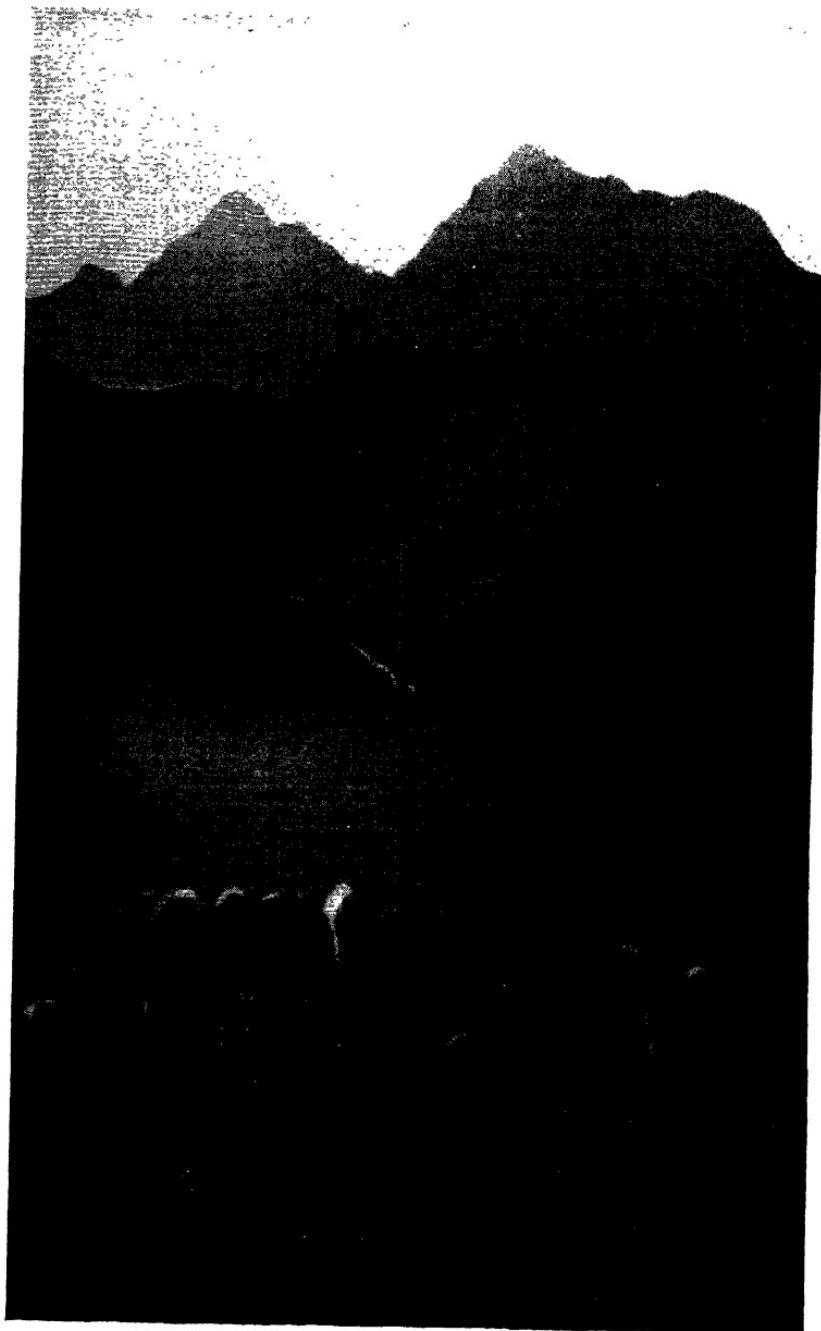
*Sunday, 11th October, 1936.*

The 22 bodies of those who perished in the *Pourquoi Pas?* arrive at St. Malo.

(Press extract added in December 1937)

<sup>1</sup> Fat is a specific in cases of supernatural manifestation. When séances of witchcraft are held, the little children's behinds are smeared with fat to prevent monsters from entering into them while they are asleep and robbing them of their souls.

<sup>2</sup> Kamioun – A plank two inches in width and three feet in length, used for softening skins or articles of clothing made from skins.



THE DOGS BATHING IN A LAKE

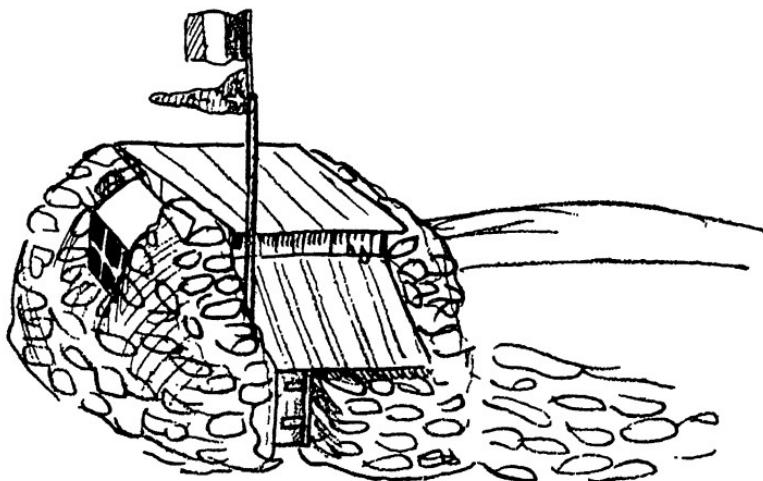


Kristian came in to see me early this morning, and asked me:

'Where is your flag?'

He climbed on to the wall, and a few moments later the French flag and my own small flag were floating for the first time over my hut.

Kristian was as pleased as I was.



<sup>1</sup> This was the flag which I and my companions had at the time of our crossing of the Inlandsis; on a blue ground are the Little Bear and the Polar star, towards which a compass-card is pointing with the inscription 'Straight North'.

## CHAPTER IV

### LIFE GOES ON

*Monday, 12th October, 1936.*

Snow was falling. The clouds had dispersed, and revealed the mountains which were now white with snow. At sea-level, the falling tide had left a strange dark line along the shore.

Doumidia, Yosepi, Gâba and I stood at the door of the hut and watched the gathering darkness.

'Now again for the second time it's gayer out of doors than it is at home.'

'Why?' I asked. 'Because the winter has come?'

'No, it's because Yoanna is ill in there.'

This morning Yoanna had felt some pain and stiffness. I went to see what was the matter with her, and found her crouching on the platform, breathing with difficulty, with drawn features, and groaning unrestrainedly. She was feverish, with a pain in her side, and had had diarrhoea since midday; in fact, all the symptoms of the malady which carried off more than sixty people last winter. . . .

Yes, indeed Doumidia was right. It was no longer gay at home.

It was half-past nine in the evening, and as the weather was fine I put Timertsit and Ekridi out of doors. They were both asleep, lying across my feet; and I took one under each arm (they had grown heavy already), and put them down outside the door.

While still half asleep, they took a few tottering footsteps, stretched themselves, made water, and turned round

towards me; and finally went off together on the chance of finding something to eat.

It was a starry night; there was an aurora borealis, and one could smell the snow, which had transformed the whole scene, with a tranquil and softening effect which extended even to the barking of the dogs. At sea, there was a swell which brought the ice blocks into violent contact with each other and made the icebergs crumble.

I wandered slowly round my little hut to see it from every angle, in the dim light of the aurora. Notwithstanding the darkness, I descended to the rocks which low tide had left bare, where I climbed on to a stack of provisions in order to enjoy the effect of my lighted window.

The atmosphere created by my hut was little short of marvellous. Within that space of barely more than six feet square I was conscious only of smiling welcome, cheerfulness, warmth. The light from my hurricane lamp cast its rays upon my desk, my books, my paper, the bench covered with skins of dogs and sealskins, my guns. I had nailed to the ceiling the skin of a large seal, and this also contributed to the atmosphere of warmth and general well-being.

I had hardly sat down when I heard Timertsit and Ekridi scratching at the door. I kept silent and did not move; whereupon, seeing that they had failed in their object, they began afresh. I waited. The scratching was then renewed with increasing urgency, and followed by a series of little cries; then further and still more ruthless scratching. At last, seeing that I was not to be moved to pity, they began whining; they moaned, they yelped. Then, suddenly, they left the door and settled themselves in front of my window, where the whining was renewed; they then made a half-turn, leapt towards the door to see whether it had been opened in the meantime, returned to the window, climbed on to the sill, and there, in the rays of my lamp, began to howl. I lifted a corner of the bit of material which covered my window and could see the pair of them sitting near each other with their muzzles pointed upwards,

weeping. They looked so unhappy, both of them, that I was sorely tempted to let them in. It was half-past ten. I stretched myself out in my sleeping-bag and began reading the *Worship of Civa*.

Soon afterwards the howling ceased. Then I heard scratching and growls, with an occasional fight, after which the growling and scratching began again. It was not long before I became absorbed in my reading and paid no further attention to what was happening outside.

Suddenly I heard the scratching and moaning, no longer at the outside door, but just outside the door of the hut itself. I got up and opened it.

Two small heads appeared just above the threshold. Timertsit and Ekridi, shaking and quivering, covered with dirt and uttering little cries, squeezed themselves through the door and crowded round my legs. They licked me; they nibbled at me; they dashed in a mad helter-skelter across the tiny space which was all that my hut allowed them.

It was half an hour past midnight. They had been 'working' since nine-thirty.

*Tuesday, 13th October, 1936.  
Public funeral of those who  
perished in the Pourquoi Pas?*

(Press extract added in December 1937)

Nine o'clock, and snowing.

Yoanna was prostrate, and she gave me the impression that she wished to be left without nursing of any kind.

Gâba had had a violent twitching of the eye on the eve of her mother's death at Tasissaq, in July. She had the same experience last night.

Kara, on the eve of her sister Prederika's death, at Tokroda, had a similar experience. And it was repeated last night.

3 p.m. Peace reigned within the hut. The children

were playing, whilst Tekri, Kriwi, Yosepi, Gâba and Aroni were lying stretched out on the window platform. Tekri was setting them sums in addition, of which the following was a specimen:

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Paoda was sewing little embroidered kamiks. Sitting cross-legged, and holding strips of sealskin painted red between her bare, rounded knees, she drew her needle slowly through them, sewing tiny squares of coloured skin. The thread was made of dogs' intestines, which Paoda cut up, and then rolled between her fingers and her cheek.

I went over to Yoanna. She was lying on her chest, with her knees drawn up beneath her stomach. Again she had thrown off her blanket. Ever since she had been taken ill I had been obliged to enact a regular play, dashing suddenly into the hut to take her unawares. As soon as I had got outside, she would push away the blankets with which I had covered her. Occasionally, and in spite of my strict orders to the contrary, she would get down from the platform and lie in a confused heap on a toumara,<sup>1</sup> facing the entrance passage, flat on her chest and with her knees drawn up beneath her. It was cooler there, and as she was stifling it made her feel more comfortable. Whenever she saw someone pass the window and thought it was myself, she climbed back with all speed on to the platform and hastily covered herself with her blanket.

She was lying down, leaning her elbows on her jersey made of skins which was rolled up to make a pillow. Her eyes were wide open and her breath came with difficulty, as it had that morning and on the day before. Her little

<sup>1</sup> Packing-case.

chignon looked the same as ever, perched on the top of her head, a comic sight. The upper portion of her head, near the base of the skull, was devoid of hair; and as it fell thereon, the light of the ounakrit revealed patches of colour, pale yellow or pale blue.

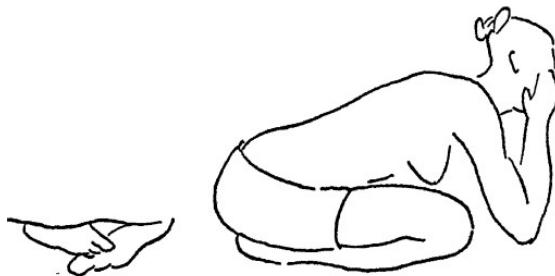
'How are you?' I asked her.

'Bad.'

'Are you cold?'

'Yes, I am.'

'Drink some tea. I will give you more sugar when you have finished what you have.'



'How could I possibly drink tea?' she said, turning her head away (implying thereby that she had no desire for tea).

'Paoda,' I said, 'when you see her take off her blanket, don't simply tell her to put it back. Put it back yourself.' And so saying I left her and went to Kara, who was washing my linen.

'Have you any soap?'

'Yes, a large piece.'

A cry was suddenly heard. It came like a blinding light.

'Anâna!'

Paoda, on her knees, was preparing to turn Yoanna over on to her back.

'Anâna! . . .'

'Ah!' Yoanna cried.

'Mummy!'

'Kriwi! Come here!' Paoda cried out.

'Odarpi! Some snow!' Tigayet yelled at the top of her voice. She was seated on the window platform, her arms outstretched, her mouth wide open, her eyes dilated. Her hand was opening and closing convulsively.

'Odarpi!' she bellowed as though she were on the point of suffocation. 'Some snow! Some snow!' Odarpi, Kristian, and Mikidi had been in my hut for the last few minutes, and were quietly smoking their pipes while they waited for me.

Two days earlier, Tigayet had had her 'annual fit'. She was about to begin sewing, when she said, suddenly: 'I believe I am going to have my fit.' A moment later she lay stretched out with her eyes closed, her mouth wide open, and shaken by violent trembling from head to foot.

'Odarpi! Odarpi! some snow! some snow!' Thus she continued her yelling.

I hurled myself at her, laid her out brutally on her back, placed a piece of ice between her breasts and one in each of her hands, which she clasped convulsively. I dashed icy water over her face.

'Odarpi! Odarpi! some snow! some snow!' And so it went on.

But it was too late. There she lay, inert, motionless.

'Kriwi! Anâna!' Paoda cried out once more. Kriwi went to her, and the two sisters, crouched on either side of Yoanna, began to weep. The time was then a quarter past three.

They wept in concert. With an effect as of one long drawn out wail, each sob began simultaneously, and rose and fell in perfect unison; increased in volume, dying down and coming to an end at the same identical moment.

Odarpi had just come to Tigayet; and so, after raising her head, I left her and went over to see how Yoanna was faring. I closed her eyes. Beneath her temples one could still feel the circulation; but it was very feeble. . . .

The weeping continued. Not a word was uttered. Mikidi sat on the platform, holding his two children in

his arms, whilst Kristian was also in his place farther along, with his children. Yosepi was driving the dogs outside with a series of kicks; whilst I went and sat on the platform at Kara's side.

Odarpi filled his pipe, bent over the ounakrit, drew a few puffs, pressed down the tobacco with his thumb, and rose and addressed me:

'Not quite over yet?'

'No, but it soon will be.'

A moment earlier I had told Doumidia that I would give her a warm under-garment. For two days past her chest had been hurting her 'inside'. So we went off together to my hut.

This universal snow, the clouds lying low over the mountains, the wind, the colourless sea – all those changes brought about within a space of ten minutes had filled our minds with thoughts of death.

It was damp, dark, and chilly in my hut. I lighted my lamp, drew out a chest from beneath my bench, and made a search for the warmest garment I possessed. We did not speak a word. Doumidia looked ill. She was pale, with drawn, tired eyes, and feverish.

'You don't feel well, little girl,' I said, stroking her cheek.

'No,' she answered, and I saw a tear glistening in her eyes.

'You feel sad because of Yoanna?'

'Oh, no. I was just thinking about last year, when everyone died.'

At that moment the door opened and Yosepi came in.

'Could you lend me a gun?'

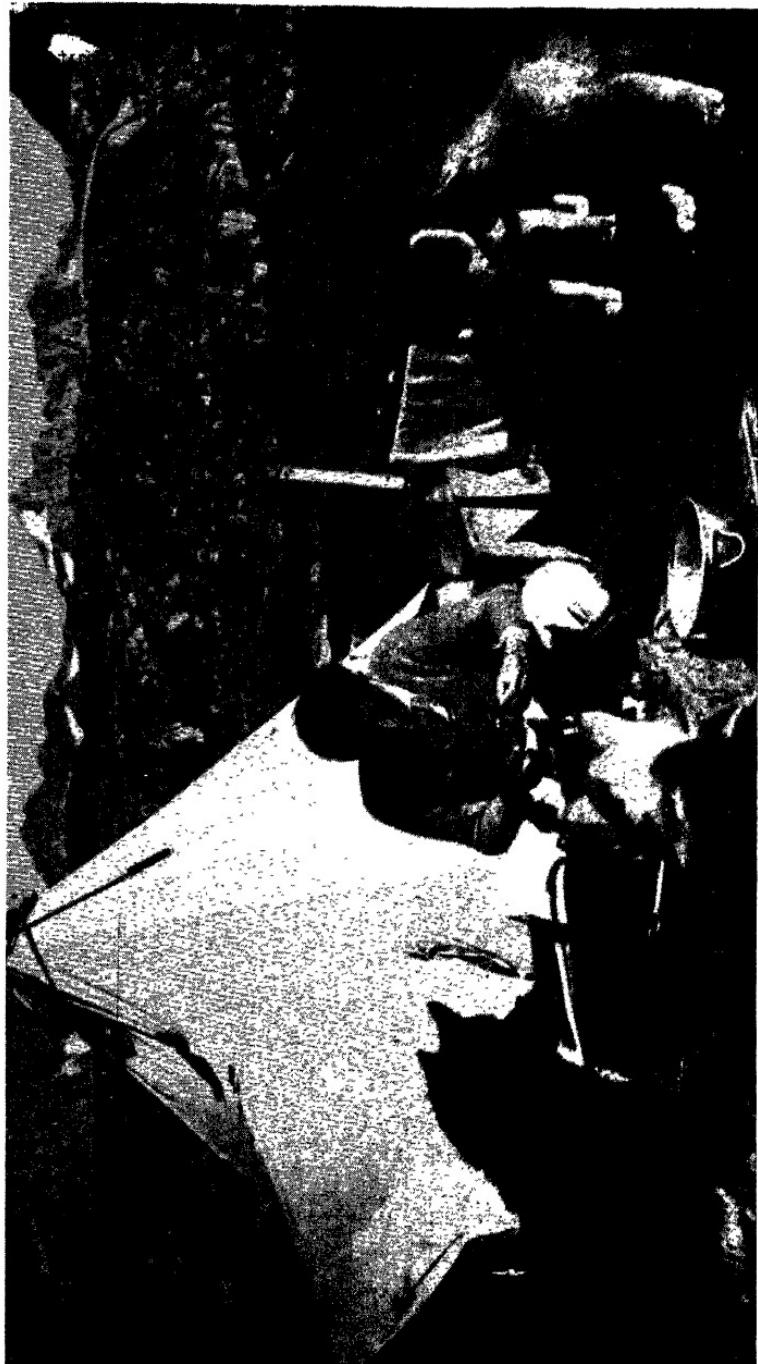
'Why?' I asked.

'For the hawk that's hovering over the hut.'

'Tell me why,' I said, suspecting that he referred to some custom of which I had not heard.

'Because, really, it's much too near for me not to have a shot at it.'

Outside, I could hear the children whistling to attract the hawk. The time was then twenty-five minutes past three.



CUPBOARD LOVE



Doumidia undressed herself to put on the under-garment which I had at last found.

'And what happens now?' I said.

'Now they will take her out, and to-morrow perhaps, they will put her under the stones.'

'How long will she stay in the house?'

'They will take her out now, now.'

Again the door was opened, and Odarpi came in and asked me to return with him. The aspect of the hut was unchanged, and the weeping had not ceased. Odarpi relighted his pipe at an oil lamp. 'Let us go,' he said once more. Kristian and Mikidi rose, Kristian taking his pipe from a miscellaneous collection of odds and ends heaped up on his table. He filled his pipe, lighted it, put both his hands in his pockets, and said 'Yes'.

I sat down on the platform by Yoanna's head, and alongside Kriwi who was dutifully playing second to her sister's wailing and laments. I asked for a mirror, and a search was made everywhere. Finally, Kristian handed me one, which was cracked in the middle, and I held it before her lips. The surface remained untarnished. To enable me to see better, Kristian struck a match, holding it close under my nose; then he used it to relight his pipe. I gave him back the mirror, left the platform, and went over and leaned my back against the window platform.

'Let us go,' Mikidi said, standing up with his hands in his pockets, and exhorting the two women to cease their crying and begin their task of laying out Yoanna's body. The time was then twenty minutes to four.

After giving vent to a few more sobs, Paoda rose and stood up on the platform, and Kriwi likewise.

'Put her hands like that,' Odarpi said, crossing his hands over his chest.

'And which jersey should we put on?' Paoda asked.

'How many has she now?'

'Two - not knitted ones.'

'That will be enough. They will do to cover her head with.'

Over her breast they laid the jacket which had served her for a pillow, drawing down the hood to cover her face. Then they wrapped her in her two Kra, one of them an ancient sealskin, the other a reindeer skin, worn out and almost hairless, which Knud Rasmussen had given her in 1933. Tigayet took away one of the skins which was stretched beneath the roof<sup>1</sup> for drying, and gave the thong to Paoda; and with that thong which had been threaded through the holes that long ago had enabled the skin to be stretched for drying when it was new, they tied her up from head to foot.

'There, that's done,' Paoda said.

Odarpi told Yosepi to go and fetch the stone-carrier. Two days previously, with two odd pieces of wood and two bits of planking, I had made a sort of tray which enabled two people to transport the large stones I needed for building the walls of my hut.

'Come, let us go,' Odarpi said.

Yoanna was now a mere bundle which projected over the edge of the platform. Kristian, Odarpi, Mikidi and I laid hold of her, and no sooner had we done so than Paoda's and Kriwi's tears and moans broke out afresh.

In the entrance passage we were nearly crushed between the walls and the burden we were carrying. Though bent almost double, our heads grazed along the rafters above, which near the hut were damp, and towards the exit were covered with ice. Outside, darkness had already fallen. There was a cold wind, and snow was falling.

'Where are we going to put her?' Mikidi said.

'As far off as possible?' Kristian asked, with a glance at me.

'Yes, that will be best.'

'Over there, to the west—that would be a good place,' Mikidi said, 'but it is on a sleigh track.'

<sup>1</sup> In summer, the skins are laid out on the ground for drying, and secured by means of small wooden pegs inserted in holes made for the purpose round the whole circumference of the skin. In winter the skins are stretched on special frames by means of thongs passed through the same holes. The frames are placed above the platform, under the beams of the roof.

'That would do very well, over there,' Kristian observed, indicating by a movement of the eyebrows the hill which rose near the spot where my hut was set up.

'Yes,' Mikidi said, 'and it's not on any track.'

'Come along, then,' said Odarpi.

Once more we laid hold of the skins and placed them across the carrier. Kristian told Gâba to go and fetch my spade and pickaxes; and then, with Odarpi and Kristian at either side, Mikidi behind, and myself in front, we set out.

Though there were four men to carry her, she was a heavy weight; and as the shafts of the carrier were of different lengths, I had one hand behind my back and the other in front of me.

There was still only a light covering of snow, but the stones were hidden beneath it; and my feet from time to time would come in sudden contact with ridges in the ground and my ankles twist on loose pebbles. We passed near the big rounded rock behind which the three bear's 'skins were hanging up. How white they had seemed to be the day before! But now that the snow had come they looked dirty and ill-favoured.

The dogs, thinking that we were bringing them their food, began to bark and drag at their chains. Timertsit and Ekridi, anticipating a walk, came crowding round my legs.

Behind us came Gâba, Yosepi, and Aroni, carrying pickaxes and spades. We passed my little tent, which was still set up, for there remained a quantity of things for which I had yet to find suitable places, both in my provisions store and my hut. We then left Wap's den on our right and began an ascent over rocks and stony ground.

'Wittou, if you are tired, say so,' Kristian said to me.

'Well, I should like to stop myself,' Mikidi said.

So we laid her down, only too relieved, all of us, by our own decision to make a halt. She was heavy.

I looked behind me; and in the semi-darkness of night and snow combined, I could clearly distinguish, in the

distance at the sea's edge, the black outline of the hut with its windows showing bright pools of light.

Kranorsouak, who had been tied up since the previous day, was pawing the ground, howling, and dragging at his chain in our direction. I could see him making sudden leaps which threw him high into the air.

'That will be a good place,' Odarpi said, pointing to a pile of stones above us, which stood out like some sombre etching.

'Very well, then, let us go there,' Kristian agreed; and we moved off once more.

Behind Gâba, Yosepi, and Aroni, those of my dogs who were too young to be put on the chain followed us, capering and frisking about in the newly fallen snow. Mikidi raised the litter at his end whilst I lowered it at mine, in a joint effort to keep it as nearly horizontal as possible.

And thus we arrived. We laid her on the ground at the edge of a large black rock, and climbed on to the broken, stony heap to look for some place in which to leave her.

'Here, perhaps,' Mikidi said.

We went to him, and he showed us a strange hollow in the ground, dark and forbidding; but he himself suggested a still further search.

The wind was rising, and here and there little puffs of newly fallen snow were uplifted by its breath. My pull-over was an insufficient protection, and I felt cold, especially at my feet and the tip of my nose. Snow was falling, and the night was growing darker and darker; but a short distance away I could still see the black outlines of the big rock and of the sad burden which lay at its foot.

'Here, perhaps,' Kristian said, stretching out his hand with the fingers closed, and pointing to a sort of crevasse in the rocks.

'Yes, that will do very well,' Odarpi answered.

We went down to fetch her. The short, steep path was difficult and our burden heavy. Our feet stuck fast and slid backwards every moment.

In the crevasse, we could see nothing but its dark rim

and the falling snow. The hut, the sea - everything had disappeared. We removed a few stones and scratched up the soil which was not yet frozen, to make a level surface.

'Will that do?' Mikidi asked; and Kristian agreed. We laid hold of our load.

'How shall we put her?' Kristian said.

'Like this, perhaps,' Odarpi answered.

We turned her round, with myself between the rock and her body, and laid her down. Her body lay over my feet, and it felt as though it still had the warmth of life. To release myself, I had to lean against the rock, withdraw one foot, and step over her.

We heaped up stones against the rock, the pile rising gradually higher and higher; these were to serve as a base for the final covering, for which we picked out long flat stones; and after laying these, we piled other stones above them on account of the dogs. It was pitch dark. We left the pickaxes and spades as they lay, for we should need them next day when we came there to finish our work.

'Let us go,' Odarpi said. And we returned to the hut.

The time was then half-past four. It was barely an hour since she had died. . . .<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Had it been forty years ago, or less, we should all have had to conform with funeral rites of a very strict nature.

Immediately after Yoanna's passing (at that time she was known as Iguimadr), the entire contents of the hut (in particular all the skins and every article made from skins) would literally have been thrown out of doors, by the entrance passage, and even through the windows for the sake of speed. The body would have been wrapped in its Kra. Mikidi (the husband of the dead woman's eldest daughter) would have attached a thong to the feet, hastily dragged the corpse outside, and heaped stones over it. On his return, he would have found a fire, made with climbing plants, lighted on the threshold. He would have walked actually through the fire, climbed on to the platform, and there rejoined his wife and Kriwi (Yoanna's second daughter). For three days all three of them would have remained crouching at the back of the platform with their faces to the wall, wearing their hoods on their heads. After a lapse of three days, all the objects thrown outside would have been brought back and washed in urine - and every occupant of the hut similarly cleansed.

The three mourners would not have resumed their ordinary mode of life until they had submitted to innumerable rites of purification. These, gradually and in turn, would have left them free to make use of their knives; to go out of doors; to go down to the seashore; to embark in the oumiak or a kayak; to go hunting, etc. But for a whole year they would have observed strict and complicated taboos in the matter of diet.

Within the hut, Paoda and Kriwi still kept up their moaning and laments. Azak and Kerta were also crying beside them.

'Tell them to be quiet,' Mikidi said as he came in. 'They've got no reason to cry.'

Without my having said a word to him, Yosepi, perched on the wall of my hut, was putting my flag at half-mast.

'And now there are her blanket and her jersey,' Kristian said.

'And what about that?' Paoda asked as she handed me the orange-coloured pullover which Yoanna had worn daily.

'To-morrow,' I replied, 'we will give it a good wash with soap, and Kriwi can have it.'

On a rock which low tide had left bare, and amid snow and darkness, we piled together into a heap her blanket black with filth, and the cotton garment like a shirt which I had made for her, and which she used to put on when I told her to do so, but removed as soon as I left the hut. I poured a little petrol over the heap and we set fire to it.

'And now,' said Kristian, turning round to me. 'What next?'

'Why?'

'She was ill. So what do you advise?'

'What is your own idea?'

'What I think,' Kristian replied, 'is that we don't want all of us to be ill too, like it happened last year.'

'Well, then, in my opinion the whole hut should be washed, and then we ourselves and all the children should wash from head to foot and put on clean jackets; and we ought to take outside everything that we don't wash to-day and do it to-morrow, so that not a speck of dirt is left anywhere and we all become like new men.'

'Yes, that will be best,' Kristian said.

'Yes, just what I think,' Odarpi declared.

'Just like we used to do,' Mikidi observed.

'Yes, but it was urine that you used to wash with,'<sup>1</sup> I said.

'That's true—but now we wash with the soap you gave us,' Kristian said, following up this remark by asking me, laughingly, 'And when will there be no more soap left in that loft of yours? And when is there going to be another snowstorm of soap like there was yesterday?'

On the rock, the fire was burning merrily and the falling snowflakes looked like golden rain.

Inside the hut my two primus stoves were in action, and hot water was on the way.

Kriwi, crouching on the platform where Yoanna so lately rested, was rubbing and polishing vigorously. Beads of perspiration were glistening on her nose. Odarpi, standing before his chest on which he had placed a basin in which the water was already dirty, and naked to the waist, was engaged in washing his hair.

'I shall wash Kristian's children to-morrow,' I said, 'and when you are all washed you must put on clean jackets. We will wash all the jackets to-morrow.'

Tigayet glowered at me.

'Well, as far as I'm concerned, I shan't wash anything to-night, not even my children. I've got no strength yet.'

'Very well, then, Kara or Odarpi must do it. If you want to be ill. . . .'

'Yes, I know,' Odarpi said in an undertone, nodding to me.

Every object on Yoanna's little table was taken out of doors and placed between stones, on account of the dogs: and I suggested that they should be sorted out the next day.

'That might go into the sea, perhaps?' Kristian said to

<sup>1</sup> In former times (and not infrequently at the present day, when soap is not available), both human beings and inanimate objects were cleansed by means of fermented urine.

me, pointing to the chamber pot and the meat tin which she used for spitting.

'Yes, that will be best.'

The chamber pot, a conspicuous little white object, swayed and rocked on the waves like a small block of ice.

I too must go and wash and change my linen.

The sea had risen; and the spindrift, as it fell upon the still burning blanket, was like effervescent fire.

On reaching my hut, I found Doumidia sitting there, with her hands on her knees and palms turned upwards.

'How glad I am that there is another hut here,' she said. 'Last winter, when there were dead people everywhere, one didn't know where to go.'

I returned to the hut. The women, naked to the waist, were busy washing. Kara, seated on the window platform, had her back turned to the ounakrit, which cast a feeble light on her muscular back. Even Tigayet was scrubbing herself. Some large brown patches on Paoda's body were evidence of ecchymosis in the past.

But not a sign of lather could I see. Washing was an art they had yet to learn.

'Climb on to the chest,' Kristian said to me, seeing that I hesitated to put my dirty kamiks upon it. 'It doesn't matter; it's dirty too.'

Standing on the chest, I proceeded to wash Kerta and Agoudo, Kristian's children. A few moments later their little bodies were covered with a white lather.

'How ever did you do it?' Paoda asked me, in amazement.

'Easy enough. First of all, water. Then soap on the body. Then a damp towel, with soap on that. After that, you start rubbing.'

Kriwi, seated on the planks of the platform which she had just finished scouring, was also washing herself. Her legs were stretched out and she was completely naked. Her



KARA, MY ADOPTED MOTHER



body of light amber stood out in clear cut, bold relief against the sombre background of the platform. Odarpi had washed himself and put on a clean shirt. Sitting on his toumara, he was occupied in carving out a little wooden cross. The whole company was sniffing, and I made a fresh distribution of tubes of vaseline.

Every jacket in the hut was impeccably white and clean.

'This is the only jacket I have,' Ogui said to me, holding out some dirty rags.

'Same with me,' Kriwi added.

A few moments later Ogui was stumbling over the tail of one of my shirts, and Kriwi dragging at one of my pull-overs to bring it well down below her thighs.

The whole cleansing business was finished. It was then seven o'clock in the evening.

Doumidia was bending over and slowly deciphering, with the aid of my lamp, a note which Gâba had just brought in. She raised her head and said to me:

'Tekri has written; he says we ought not to go out alone.'

'Why?'

'Because, before she died, she said that perhaps she wouldn't go to Heaven - and that she would come back.'

I rose and put on my pullover.

'Where are you going?'

'For a walk.'

'You're mad!'

'I am going for a walk. I shall go in the direction of the tent, and perhaps right up there, where she is.'

'You're mad!'

'No, I'm not. You'll see. I shall come back presently and nothing will have happened to me.'

'No!' Doumidia cried out, clinging to my arm.

Gâba looked at me, his eyes wide open with astonishment. I was under no illusion as to the effect I was producing.

So I started out. It was pitch dark and snowing, but my eyes became gradually accustomed to the surrounding

gloom. Behind the big rock the three bears' skins were swaying about; and Aderangui,<sup>1</sup> my black bitch who was tied up there, tried to come up to me, looking like some black demon. I climbed for a short distance along the broken, stony ground by the path which we had followed a short time before. Glancing behind me, I saw how dense the night had become. Away below, obscured by a curtain of mist, the windows of the hut glimmered faintly.

Several times on my way back I looked behind me. Was there really no one there? . . .

Doumidia and Gâba were sitting on my bench, awaiting my return. They gazed at me in silence.

*Wednesday, 14th October, 1936.*

7 o'clock. Tipou was lying down in the hut, motionless, with her knees drawn up to her chest and her face hidden beneath her arms. I asked her what was the matter.

'Last night she saw something appear at the window, something black, which she took to be a man, with shining eyes and very white teeth. She has been like that ever since,' Kara told me.

This morning we awoke to a world of white, with about eighteen inches of powdery snow. The sun shone with almost dazzling brilliance, but with a wind which penetrated to every corner its rays seemed powerless to warm the air. As far as the eye could reach, the earth had assumed an aspect of winter, lifeless and dreary.

With the sun shining down upon us, we ascended in single file to where Yoanna lay, Odarpi carrying a small quantity of earth dug up close by the hut, and Kristian holding the little cross which had been fashioned the day before. We removed a few stones, and the skin which enshrouded her came once more into view; but I could think only of a parcel tied up with string. Odarpi then threw down three handfuls of the earth which he had carried on the spade, and put the little cross in place. By

<sup>1</sup> She who is nameless.

using the pickaxe we secured gravel and earth, a few spadefuls of which sufficed to fill up the gaps between the stones.  
‘Why, it looks like coffee,’ Azak cried.

Mikidi, perched on the wall of my hut, hoisted the flag once more.

The hour was 9 a.m. She had died at three o’clock in the afternoon of the previous day.

*10 o’clock.* Sitting cross-legged on the platform, in the place which was Yoanna’s, Kriwi, with a large heap of beads before her, was threading them on a string in decorative designs of white, red, and blue.

‘Do all those belong to you?’ I asked her.

Kriwi raised her eyebrows to indicate an affirmative reply – a trait which she had inherited from Yoanna.

‘What are they for?’

‘A necklace for my doll.’

I had filled half my loft – that half which was too shallow to take any but small objects – with dried climbing plants; and now, every time the door was closed, a shower of twigs would fall through the chinks in the ceiling, covering my newspaper and settling plentifully down my neck – where they scratched.

I tied up Kranorsouak side by side with Inero. Now that the snow had come they would soon be doing sleigh work together, and it was advisable that they should get accustomed to each other as soon as possible.

Kranorsouak and Inero were afraid of each other. Their growls were simultaneous, and their tails would be in the air or between their legs at the same moment.

‘What a splendid fight they will have!’ Kristian said, as he and Odarpi were laying down, among stones, some enormous trunks of driftwood which were to make a stand for the oumiaks.

‘And Kranorsouak will get the best of it,’ Odarpi said.

'Yes, but they won't fight,' I remarked. 'They're afraid of each other.'

'Very well, then, set them on to each other. . . .'

There were lines stretched all round the exterior of the hut, and jackets of every colour were flapping in the wind.

This evening Odarpi told us stories of hunting. Tekri played with Tougoutanangâ. Yosepi, half naked, 'played' with Kriwi who was no less scantily clothed. Gâba also 'played' – but with the harmonica. Tipou, squatting on the damp floor, where the darkness was almost complete, was occupied in making a necklace for herself with the beads which I had given her. Kara was threading hers in sets of colours, on a long white thread. Paoda was embroidering Kerta's little white kamiks; and finally, Tigayet, with her head in the clouds, was yawning noisily.

I went back to my hut with Doumidia.

'You see,' she said to me, 'all their troubles are over.'

## CHAPTER V

### WINTER IS MINE

*Thursday, 15th October, 1936.*

I went into the hut. The sun, level with the mountain tops, threw every detail of life on the platform into sharp relief.

'Wittou,' Tigayet said to me, laughing, 'Kidimani told me just now that she wanted to go and ask you for some beads for me. And she wanted to bring you this box for you to fill.'

Still laughing, she handed me a tin biscuit-box – one of the largest, needless to say.

Doumidia was still feverish. She lay quietly stretched out on the window platform, where there was a more even temperature than in my hut.

'Doumidia must drink some tea,' I told Kara, 'and I will put some medicine in it.'

The tea having been duly prepared, she handed me a bottle of Worcester sauce!

'What on earth is that?' I asked Kara.

'Why, medicine, of course!' she replied.

I made some notes on bear hunting.

Each man, up to the number of five, who has taken part in the hunt has a right to a fixed portion of the bear. But the ribs of the animal are reserved for distribution amongst the occupants of the hut in order that everyone may have a share in the feast.

It is said of a man who takes long to make a start, or who is slow of comprehension, that he is like a pregnant woman carrying one child in her hood and leading another by the hand: 'nârtidok tazertek.'

Tougoutanngâ had a waistband of yellow velvet.

'Ah!' I said, 'that came from France last year.'

'No,' Tougoutanngâ replied, 'it came from Nana.'

'And who gave it to Nana? Was it French people?'

'No, Ippa did. . . .'

Ippa was our servant.

8 p.m. On Odarpi's platform everyone was already asleep. Tigayet had not taken off her dress, and one of her breasts was seen protruding from it.

#### *A recollection*

A wartime drawing, in a number of the *Illustration*, depicted the looting of a village in Flanders.

Women and children lay stretched upon the ground, lifeless. In the foreground was a woman, one of whose breasts, like Tigayet's, was uncovered. My sudden recollection of this picture, which robbed me in a flash of all consciousness of my surroundings, came to me like a blow in the face, and gave me a fit of depression which stayed with me for the rest of the evening.

To-day I took up my quarters for the first time on the window platform. The snow which had been falling since the previous day had, in fact, now made it habitable; until then, it had been inundated by the water which fell from the roof.

10 p.m. Doumidia was asleep by my side. Her complexion, so fresh at all other times, was as yellow as old parchment, and her features looked weary and drawn. Her eyes seemed to have become more slanting and her cheekbones more prominent.

*Friday, 16th October, 1936.*

My impressions of last night amounted to nil. I merely felt rather too warm, after my five months of sleeping in a tent and having grown accustomed to it.

5.30 a.m. It was still dark, and the whole hut was already awake. Tabita was yawning. The men were yawning and scratching themselves. The women were crushing pieces of fat with their fingers and pouring the oil thus



obtained on to the moss placed at the edges of the ounakrit, preparatory to the lighting of the wicks which this process produced. So far one lamp only was burning; this belonged to Kara, who was occupied in spinning seal's tendons.<sup>1</sup> Amid the almost total darkness that reigned within the hut, the yellow rays from this lamp cast an intermittent light upon the faces and forms of each occupant.

<sup>1</sup> Seal's tendons are dried, and then drawn out into fibre. The fibres are then spun into two or three fine lengths and rolled between the hand and the cheek. After being thus prepared, seal's tendons (or it may be a bear's or a narwhal's) are used as sewing thread.

Patsiba, still fast asleep, suddenly rose and knelt, uttered two or three little cries, and then lay down again.

Outside, I could hear Kranorsouak already howling and pawing the ground.

Tekri was vigorously soaping his chin with the Marseilles soap which I had given him. He smiled at me, and then asked Kriwi to bring him his 'tsaki', or woman's knife; he drew it rapidly backwards and forwards over an ordinary knife in order to sharpen it and, making a hideous grimace as he thrust his chin forward, began to shave. His beard was at about the same stage of development as that of a boy of fourteen.

The economic system of the Eskimo is based on courtesy.

The distribution of the seal's meat brought back by the hunters is subject to meticulous regulation; each person's share is fixed. At the same time, in its general conception, the system is devised on a basis of goodwill and courtesy on the part of the hunter or of the woman who cuts up the seal.

The parents of the man who has killed it always receive the same portion – namely, half the breast together with the breast-bone. On the death of either of them, this portion reverts to the other. If they are both dead, this same portion, which is known as the 'iziwa', is given to the namesake of the one who died first.

These rules may occasionally produce strange results, of which the following may be given as an example.

Tsakatsiak, the father of Inouk, died. A month later, Poutsiak gave birth to a child. She was delivered by the old woman of the establishment, who sprinkled water over the child's mouth, took its little finger or forefinger between her own thumb and forefinger, and murmured in its ear all the names of members of its family who had recently died; and among these, and probably first of all, that of Tsakatsiak.

On the following day, Inouk brought home a seal; and handed the 'iziwa' to Poutsiak, with the words:

'That is for him.'

Poutsiak took the piece of meat, held it out to the child, and said:

'You see, your kind son has killed a big seal.' Then she proceeded to cook it and before partaking of it herself, she carved a portion and showed it to the baby, saying:

'That is your portion.'

Then, when she had finished eating, she pinched the nipples of her breast and addressed them in words which may be roughly translated as follows:

'And now, do your best to turn that meat into milk.'

Waps, ensconced in her box, was growling and moaning and making general complaints. Her two rascally puppies, standing upright on their hind paws, were taking a meal and nibbling at their mother at the same time. Their teeth had already begun to grow. . . .

*Saturday, 17th October, 1936.*

This evening I ate some carrots, with milk and a dash of rum.<sup>1</sup> A few drops of this rum were spilled on the floor, and Timertsit and Ekridi lost no time in going to sniff it. Each then retired to a separate corner, and a volley of sneezing was heard. At each sneeze their muzzles collided violently with the floor.

*Sunday, 18th October, 1936.*

Not a cloud to be seen. The thermometer was down to 14° above zero, with a violent north wind which made its way into every corner of my hut, penetrating the walls, the floor, and the ceiling. Even with my primus stove alight, I could not bring the temperature higher than 42°. Every gust of wind was felt as well as heard. I spent several hours

<sup>1</sup> I preferred not to take a single drop of alcohol with me. On the day of my arrival at Kangerdlugssuatsiaq, Charcot heard of this, and gave me a flask of rum containing rather less than half a pint.

in carefully blocking up every chink with toilet-paper and a knife. I missed my isoplac hut terribly. . . .

4 p.m. After some labour spent in stopping up the windows with articles of clothing, I succeeded in bringing the thermometer up to 60°; taking advantage of this comparative warmth, I followed my usual Sunday custom of washing Ogui, Tada, and Tipou. All three of them were seated on my bench and pretending to speak French, and a fine racket they made.

7 p.m. 'Did you go to see the dogs just now?' Yosepi asked me.

'No, why?'

'Oh, nothing.'

'But tell me why you asked me.'

'Well, Kriwi and Tougoutanngâ were sitting on the platform and heard a dog barking. Then they looked outside and saw you, all in the dark, and they said: "There's Wittou going off to look at his dogs." Wasn't it you?'

'No, it certainly was not. I haven't stirred from here.'

Yosepi refused to go back alone.

'I shall go back with you,' he told me. 'There has been some dreadful thing, I don't know what, hanging about outside.'

Tigayet, who was lying down on the platform, looked at me and said:

'How is it that one never gets tired of looking at a Kratouna?'

Apropos of something or other, we were discussing the nature of war.

'So you will have to be good,' Mikidi said to me.

'Good? What do you mean?'

'Good, like the Padasi,<sup>1</sup> who is better than anyone else.'

'Oh, yes. But why must I be good?'

<sup>1</sup> Padasi - pastor.

'Because if you are, the bullets will pass beside you and won't touch you.'

'Yes, perhaps. . . .'

'Oh, but I know it for a fact. I've been told so. I've heard people say so.'

'What did they tell you?'

'They said that when there was a war, the people who had been good were never hit by the bullets.'

'Who told you that?'

'The Padasi.'

'Yes, Mikidi, I am sure the Padasi was right.'

9 p.m. A warm and restful atmosphere in the hut. It was 'cosy', 'gemütlich' – words for which there is no equivalent in French. Some of us were asleep, some were playing, and others vaguely musing. No one had a care in the world.

Feeling this atmosphere of peace and calm, Doumidia turned to me and said:

'You are more comfortable here than in the country of the Kratouna, aren't you?'

*Monday, 19th October, 1936.*

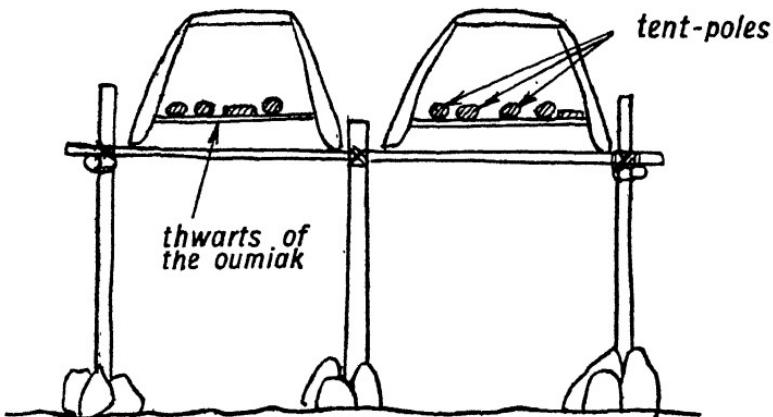
Kristian, Odarpi, and I had finished the supports for the oumiaks. Amid falling snow we had set up old tree-trunks which had grown white through the action of sea, wind and rain; and we had chosen empty tombs<sup>1</sup> for the purpose of our work.

The fjord was hidden by a greyish white curtain of falling snow, through which some icebergs of a strangely vivid white, borne along by the current, came suddenly into our line of vision and passed in slow procession quite close to the hut. The Nekrayak – the north-east wind – had heaped up small blue fragments of ice along the shore, remnants of icebergs which had collapsed in ruin. I found

<sup>1</sup> Not many years ago, the idea of desecrating a tomb would never even have occurred to an Eskimo.

myself regaining a little of the atmosphere of eager expectation which was with me on board the *Pourquoi Pas?* two years ago, when I saw the ice-pack for the first time.

With the collaboration of every occupant of the hut who was old enough to lend a hand, the two oumiaks were hoisted into position and firmly secured with thongs.



'Winter has come,' Doumidia remarked with a sigh, as she watched the falling snow and the mist growing denser every moment. It was the 19th of October, and winter had come with a vengeance.

Over the thwarts of the oumiaks (or beneath them if it is remembered that the oumiaks were upside down) the tent-poles were placed, and the tent skins, laid over these, made a waterproof foundation.

The oumiak, which in summer is a means of communication, becomes in winter a loft and provision store.

'Hold out your dress,' I said to Kerta. It was her fifth birthday. I took a piece of ship's bread from my pocket and offered it to her.

'Anertsadi (thank you),' she said.

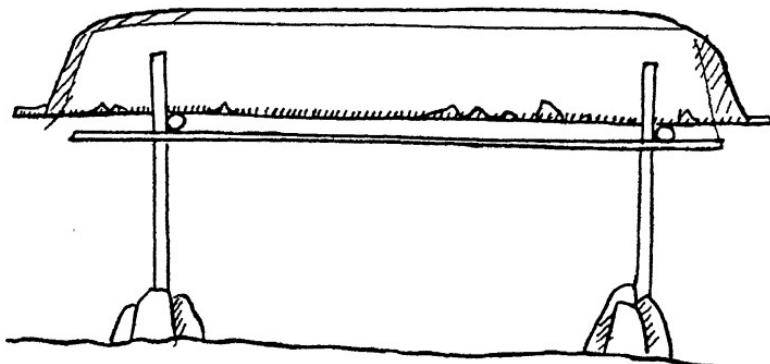
'Look,' I said, taking out a further piece from another pocket.

'Anertsadi,' she said.

'Look' – and I gave her a bar of chocolate. And so I proceeded until I had given her four, each gift being followed by an 'Anertsadi' from her.

'Wait a minute,' she said, 'I'll go and fetch a box to put what you have given me in – and anything more you give me.' She then returned with a large tin box, placed my presents in it, and held it out to me.

'Look,' I said, and gave her a handful of sugar.



*oumiak supports*

'Anertsadi,' she said. And I gave her a second handful, which I followed up with a large cake of Marseilles soap.

'Anertsadi.'

Finally, I gave her a little sachet.

'Those are beads,' I told her. She took them, this time without a word, and off she went.

To celebrate his daughter's birthday, Kristian removed the large seal from the stones beneath which he had placed it a month earlier, and it was towed back to the hut,

leaving a trail of blood along which the dogs were scattered at intervals.<sup>1</sup>

In the entrance passage, the men bent forward with their backs in contact with the stones which formed the roof, and dragged the idiwitsi along in a series of small jerks. Four men in the passage, surrounding a seal larger and broader than a man lying on the ground, do not leave much room (generally speaking, a person wishing to go out is expected to give way politely to another coming in). Nothing was to be seen but four backsides clothed in furs and advancing with considerable difficulty.

Within the hut, all the women and children were in their places. No one was outside. The impatience with which the event was awaited increased its importance; and that same impatience was itself increased by the fact that for eight days past they had touched no seal's meat, and had been living on nothing but rice, macaroni, lentils, and the ship's bread which I gave them.

At last, painfully and slowly, the seal's journey through the passage was completed. The animal was dragged up to Kristian's platform, and the men began their scramble for the prey.

I must here explain that while a seal just brought home by the hunters is cut up by the women, the 'idiwitsi' seal is carved by the men; the reason being that the flesh of a freshly killed seal must be cooked before it is eaten, whilst the high meat of the 'idiwitsi' is the most highly prized of all foods, native or imported.<sup>2</sup>

There was no half-heartedness about the men as each one proceeded to hack away an enormous portion for himself. Little by little a powerful odour pervaded the whole hut, which became gradually filled with the warm

<sup>1</sup> This is known as the 'idiwitsi'. During the summer, which is the most fruitful period for hunting, the best hunters are accustomed to lay up reserves for the winter. Entire seals, skinned or otherwise, are placed beneath heaps of stones and are often not eaten until six or seven months later, in an extremely high condition.

<sup>2</sup> In the same way, the seal just killed becomes the property of the mother of the man who has killed it. The 'idiwitsi' seal belongs to the hunter's father.

vapour that arose from the disembowelled creature on the floor.

Amidst sounds of belching, jaws working, shouts of appreciation, and conversations from platform to platform, the seal's dimensions gradually decreased, the carcase gaped wide open, and the intestines were released and flowed over the damp flagstones.

'Ah!' Mikidi bellowed, 'there's the blood flowing!'

A black and viscous streamlet glided slowly over the skin on which the seal was laid. Mikidi, shouting and bellowing, hastily gathered the precious liquid in his cupped hands, poured it into a basin beside him, and drank a mouthful of it from time to time.

Odarpi's mouth was crammed and he was masticating noisily. He took between his teeth a large strip of black meat encrusted in fat from which a thick, heavy oil trickled down, cut into it with a rapid movement of his jaws, and drank. Four bites, during the course of which he carved himself a fresh portion, were all he needed; the whole contents of his mouth were then gulped down.

'Well, all I can say is, that's far and away the finest stuff in all the world,' was his comment.

Seated round the meat spread out on the skin stretched upon the muddy flagstones, Yosepi, Gâba, Tekri, Kristian, Odarpi, and Mikidi were cutting up, carving, drinking large handfuls of sticky blood, shouting, licking their fingers, masticating, swallowing, stuffing themselves with meat and fat, sucking at fragments of intestine, and handing warm, steaming portions to their respective wives. And the whole scene was played in the shadows thrown by the ounakrit, with a kind of feverish intensity, in an atmosphere that suggested some strange ritual.

'You really wouldn't like a little piece?' Mikidi asked me, with his mouth stuffed full.

I ate a small shred. I knew the taste already from an experience of the previous year; the flesh was flabby, with a sharp, spicy taste which vaguely suggested that a kitchen knife might have been left to rust in it. However, I found

it quite good, despite a flavour of fresh blood which was far from pleasant.

'Eat it up, eat it up,' Kristian said, trying to encourage me.

Fortunately, I knew the disastrous effect of this meat on my stomach, and I remembered that Knud Rasmussen, though far more accustomed to it than I, died of intestinal poisoning brought on by a repast similar to the one then in progress.

'Wittou! Wittou!' Doumidia cried out to me from the window platform, where she was sitting, 'go outside quick, quick, or the dogs will murder Krenerak.'

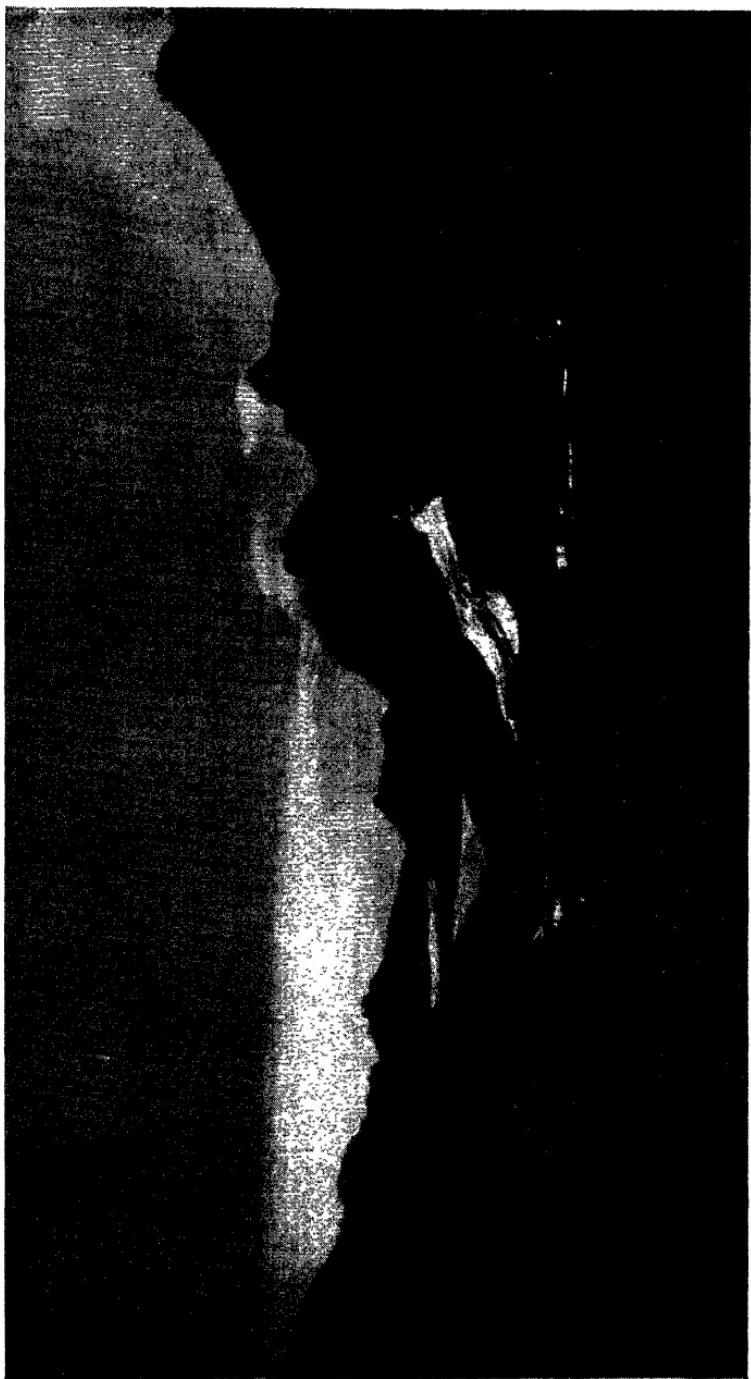
I grasped immediately what was happening. Little Krenerak, who was only a few weeks old, had twice on the previous day come trotting up to the hut with his tail in the air; and it was there that all the dogs rummaged about the whole day long, eating whatever they could find—bones, snow impregnated with urine, excrement. Realising the danger, I had driven him away each time, giving him little flicks in the legs, and followed him, shouting at him, as far as his kennel. He ran along as clumsily as a bear, uttering little cries of terror.

But like all children, he was disobedient.

I dashed outside, and my forehead came into violent collision with one of the stones laid crosswise to form the roof of the passage.

There in the snow I saw Mikidi's wretched little black and white bitch, raw-boned and emaciated, bow-legged, with long thin muzzle, and rickety as so many of the dogs are here, standing motionless with her teeth closed in the body of Krenerak. She had buried them in his little stomach. And now, with her head bent downwards, she maintained her grip and never stirred an inch.

I was blind with rage. I don't think I had ever felt such anger in my life, not only because Krenerak was my own puppy and I loved him, with his little eyes set so unusually wide apart, and his black tail with white tip which he always carried pointing straight upwards; but also because



DEPARTURE—THE WHOLE FAMILY IN THE OUMIAK, THE HUNTERS IN THE KAYAKS



of the stupid, futile cruelty of the little bitch whom any single one of my dogs could have laid out with one blow of the paw. Had she fought with, say, Kiviok (the dog of whom I was fondest) and killed him in a fair encounter, I should have made no objection at all, and congratulated Mikidi on possessing such a brave beast. But to make a furious attack on a little creature as weak and harmless as a puppy a month old was nothing less than revolting.

I seized the little skunk by the neck, made her relax her hold, and threw her over the rock where she was tied up. She fell on her back on the farther side with a noise which it gave me real pleasure to hear. But she got up immediately and for the second time dashed at Krenerak as he lay stretched out inert in the snow at my feet. This was beyond everything! Hardly conscious of my own action, I seized her and held her down on the ground. Having no stick, I let fly a volley of kicks on her muzzle with my heel, hoping that it would be the end of her; but as I was shod in kamiks<sup>1</sup> well stuffed with grass, my heel was doubtless quite soft, and quite certainly not painful enough for my present purpose. Gâba had by this time also come out, and thinking that my punishment was not sufficiently thorough, brought down a violent blow on the little bitch's skull; and for some moments she lay motionless.

I lifted Krenerak. His body was completely flattened out, and there must have been a horrid mess inside it. I threw him into the sea amidst the blocks of ice heaped up in the bay, and for a moment or two I looked at the little black patch as it swayed from side to side on the surface. My sight was rather dim.

On my way back to the hut I shot out a kick at the bitch's jaws; but it gave me no satisfaction.

Had this thrashing been administered by her master, Mikidi, she would have returned to him a few minutes later and licked his hands. But she knew well enough that

<sup>1</sup> Kamiks, a kind of Wellington boot, have an interior boot with hair on the inner side, and an exterior boot. Between the pliant soles of these two boots a layer of dried herbs is placed.

I was not her master; and later, whenever she caught sight of me, even at a distance, down would go her hindquarters, her tail be folded right beneath her body, and she would bark in my direction – a sign of extreme terror.

And so I returned to the hut, to find nothing left on the floor but a few vertebrae and the seal's head. The smell, accustomed to it though I was, was almost too much for me. The din was appalling. Men, women, and children alike were besmeared with purplish blood. They were covered with it; even little Tabita had it up to her eyebrows; it covered the men to their elbows. And the whole company was masticating, sucking at odd fragments of meat, chattering, shouting, laughing.

Paoda addressed Tigayet over the heads of the rest. With eyes half closed and expressive gestures of her hands, she said, as though she had some strange, unusual statement to make:

'When Mikidi cuts off his portion I get the fillet all to myself, all to myself. I eat it all up myself.'

She was making confession of a besetting sin.

Mikidi was full to bursting. He patted his swollen stomach and opened his mouth to speak, but a resounding belch was all that came forth.

'Yââ! And now I'm going to say a great big Thank you, because what we've just eaten – well, that really *is* food,' he then managed to utter.

Tekri complained of stomach-ache.

'You're no better than a Kratouna,' Mikidi said to him.

This evening I ate rice and seal. The three men came and sat down on my bench, sighing.

'We're helpless,' they said, pointing to their stomachs. I went on eating; and it occurred to me to try an experiment.

'Kara, is there any more rice left?'

'Oh, yes, a lot.'

'Why shouldn't you have some?' I said, turning round to the men.

They accepted. A few moments later they were gorging themselves with rice, each of them with a huge bowl before him.

Touyouk, Krenerak's little brother, was sitting in his kennel. With muzzle pointed upwards, he was crying his little heart out, weeping for the loss of his companion.

*8 p.m.* Kristian came in while I was writing, sat down in silence, and lighted the already filled pipe which I handed to him. He asked me not to interrupt my work, and I went on with my writing. This was the first occasion on which he had paid me a visit alone; and it was evident that there was something that he specially wished to say to me. There was silence for a while, and then he spoke:

'You remember Amannta, the sister of the old woman who died the other day?'

'Yes.'

'She had a husband who was a bit of an angakok. Some time after the death of a man living in the hut, he went to his tomb in the night. He took away the stones that covered the corpse, and with his knife he opened the stomach, cut off a piece of the liver and ate it. You know that a man's liver is as bad to eat as a bear's.<sup>2</sup> But he ate it all the same, because if he did that, no one would ever after be able to kill him by magic spells. And it was because he ate a man's liver that he died long after he would have died otherwise, as his time came.'

Kristian was silent as I wrote down the story he had just told me. But the telling of it was obviously not the object of his visit to me without a companion. It was then that I remembered that when he arrived here in the oumiak he had told everyone, with the sole exception of myself, that the Padasi, the pastor, had spoken of me at great length and had enjoined him 'to give me a lecture'.

<sup>1</sup> He was speaking of Yoanna, observing the usual taboo. No one might utter her name.

<sup>2</sup> A bear's liver gives rise to sickness, giddiness, headache, and scurfy hair.

Doumidia had lost no time in telling me the whole story the same evening in my tent.

'But what can he want to make me say?' I asked her.  
'I don't know.'

But after a long silence, she turned round to me abruptly and said:

'Is the Padasi nice to you?'

'Oh, quite. But I know he doesn't like me much.'

'Yes, you are right, he doesn't like you much, and now I hear that he has been speaking to them again about you, and not at all nicely.'

This piece of information gave me the clue to Kristian's and Mikidi's veiled animosity towards me which I had previously noticed.

'And why doesn't he like me?' I had asked Doumidia that evening.

'Because you are not like the other Kratouna,' she had replied.

I was debating within myself whether this was the origin of Kristian's visit. But he still remained silent, whilst I continued my writing. Finally he gulped and I heard his voice saying:

'Wittou!'

'Yes.'

'I've come to say something to you.'

At last he had come to the point. 'Well, what is it, Kristian?' I asked him.

'This is what it is. Now that everything is all right, I feel I want to tell you that when I arrived here I didn't like you one little bit. I didn't like you at all. When my wife died, I told Mikadi (Michel Pérez) to let you know with that big machine of his with the signals that I probably shouldn't come and join you. All my things and all my dogs were here, but I didn't care a bit about that. I simply didn't want to come back, and that was because you were here. Then I remembered the money you gave me, and I came. But when I got here I didn't like you at all. But now that everything is all right, I wanted to tell

you this. And I want to thank you for staying with us, and to tell you that I'm glad it's I and not someone else that is with you. And now we shall all be thinking of you as an Eskimo, as though you were my own brother, and not as a Kratouna any more. And you must make yourself at home with us because we shall make ourselves at home with you.'

I was considerably overcome.

'And now,' I said, after the demonstrations of cordiality which followed, 'I know that the Padasi has been speaking of me and that there are many things that he has asked you to say to me. If you wish to repeat them, please do so now. If you don't it will not matter and we shall never refer to this again.'

'No, not at all,' he replied, pulling at his pipe in some agitation, and crossing his legs. 'No, I want to tell you all that the Padasi said to me. He did *not* tell me that I was not to be kind to you. He did not tell me that we should not forget that you were a Kratouna, and that you would have to make some return for everything you asked us to do for you. He didn't say that we must remember that you were a Kratouna and keep an eye on you. No, he never said anything like that. What he said was, that we must be kind to you.'

11 p.m. Seated on my sleeping-bag on the window platform, I was busy writing. The ounakrit had long been extinguished, and the feeble light of my hurricane lamp was all that remained. In the surrounding darkness I could hear the sleepers' breathing as it rose and fell, and Tigayet's snores.

There was some disturbance on Mikidi's platform. I heard someone rise and begin to search and rummage about. All of a sudden a noise broke in upon the silence of the hut, a noise of scraping; and I understood. One of Paoda's sons had been betrayed by his bladder on the Kra, and his mother was about to retrieve the accident with the aid of a mussel shell used as a ladle.

*Wednesday, 21st October.*

The meaning and significance of the 'adek' (name), of which I wrote the other day, have been somewhat clarified by the following facts.

The mother of Mikidi (the one whom I know) and of his brother Adami was called Kerta. A short time after her death twenty years ago, a girl was born at Kungmiut, whose name is Edisa. Amongst other names, she was also given that of Kerta, and was the first since the death of Mikidi's mother to take it, with the inevitable result that Kerta's 'adek' took up residence in her body.

Five years ago Kristian's wife gave birth to a daughter; and in order that 'Mikidi might hear his mother's name again', this child received, amongst others, the name of Kerta.

The results of this state of affairs are as follows:

At Kungmiut, whenever Adami kills a seal Edisa receives the 'iziwa' (half the breast with breast-bone), i.e. the portion which formerly went to her namesake Kerta, Adami's mother.

At Kangerdlugssuatsiaq, on the same day, Kerta, Kristian's daughter, receives from Mikidi if he has killed a seal, exactly the same portion, which would formerly have reverted to the Kerta who was Mikidi's (and Adami's) mother.

As I wished to be quite clear about the whole matter, I took every member of the establishment aside, one after the other, and asked him or her privately what explanation they could give of Kerta's 'adek-ancestor' being enabled to live simultaneously in the body of Edisa and the body of Kerta. Each and all gave me a similar reply:

'The "Kerta" who lives in Edisa is the "adek-body" of the ancestor. The Kerta who lives here bears only the name of her ancestor Kerta. But both of them are entitled to the same portion of the seal.'

The part played by the little finger is a very important one.

The names of the child's ancestors are spoken aloud by the midwife as a summons to take up their lodging in its body. For this purpose she holds the baby's *little finger*.

The Kringaranguitsit,<sup>1</sup> beings which live underground and whose aspect has been intentionally depicted as frightful, have no nose and *no little finger* on the left hand.

The bodies of certain dead people (those who have died a violent death in kayaks or on the ice) sometimes return within a period of three days following the disaster.

The body enters the hut backwards. Should it come in facing the platform, this means that its intentions are evil and that every occupant will suffer death at the mere sight of it. If it has entered backwards, all that is required is that one of the occupants shall clasp it in his arms from behind and join his hands over its chest with the *little fingers* interlocked. The body then makes a struggle, but the joining of the other's hands around it in this manner renders it powerless. It then gradually ceases its struggles and quiets down. From that time onwards the man becomes once more a normal member of his family and resumes his ordinary mode of life.

Fifty years ago, near Kungmiut, a hunter saw one day a man approaching in the distance and walking backwards. He then realised that it was a body which was about to return to life. He seized it round the waist with his little fingers joined, and succeeded in reviving it. The body was that of a man from the West coast. He spent the winter at Kungmiut, and as soon as summer returned he departed in a kayak and went home.

It is said of a man who listens intently that he has ears like mussel shells.

<sup>1</sup> 'Those who have no nose.'

*Thursday, 22nd October, 1936.*

5.30 p.m. I was sitting on the window platform. Snow was falling; and through the window I saw Timertsit trotting along and looking as though she were wrapped in some kind of cotton wool. The snow made earrings for her, and she reminded me of some little girl inclined to 'show off' to everybody.

The ounakrit were alight and the water heated. Mikidi handed me a bowl of tea and a slice of bread, the black, sticky bread which Paoda had made the previous day. I drank the tea and thanked Mikidi as I returned the bowl to Paoda. Mikidi then handed me one of his pipes, which he had already filled and lighted, and invited me to smoke it.

Doumidia was asleep at my side. Yosepi, who was on the other side of me, sat up, yawned, coughed, and cleared his throat noisily.

'I've got a cold coming on.'

'You have a cold?'

'Yes. All that raw meat yesterday.'

The effect of eating raw seal's meat may be strange indeed.

Yosepi was in my hut, and had been hanging round me for some little time. He then suggested that he might drink some tea, to which I agreed. He prepared the tea, got out some sugar, placed his cup on my desk, and began drinking noisily. On my desk there was also a small piece of bread which I had been nibbling from time to time. He pointed to it and said:

'Why shouldn't I eat what is left?' I told him to carry on. He thereupon dipped the roll in the tea and proceeded to eat it in tiny mouthfuls.

'It isn't bad,' he said, 'but it's not so nice as bread.'

'Yes,' I replied, 'it isn't bread. It's a medicine.'

'What for?'

'Constipation.'

'Ah!' he cried, laughing delightedly, 'I've been constipated for two days!'

Yosepi is a well-behaved fellow. As soon as he had finished eating and drinking he washed his cup, put it back in its place, and came and sat down at my side. Less than five minutes later he got up and said, pointing at my roll of toilet-paper:

'Why shouldn't I go and use a little?'

*Friday, 23rd October, 1936.*

A memorable date. For the first time this winter I harnessed my dogs and went for a short outing with the sleigh in the valley of the lakes. Instead of harnessing them in the fan formation, I put them on a double single-trace.<sup>1</sup> It was difficult to estimate results on so short a distance; but it appeared to me that Kranorsouak and Kiviok, as leaders, were beyond reproach.

It was a real joy to me to recover that atmosphere of snow and of tense, brimming life which I always find when I am out with a sleigh.

This year, I shall have had no more than three months of summer.

*Saturday, 24th October, 1936.*

Winter had come with a vengeance. It was snowing; the thermometer was down to 12° above zero; and there was a strong north wind, which blew in gusts.

It is said of a man who is too talkative that 'the muscles of his tongue are as hard as bone'.

Or again: 'that man is a chatterer, and his mouth is nothing but muscle'.

<sup>1</sup> The 'fan' is the method generally employed by the Eskimo for harnessing dogs; each dog is attached to the sleigh by a separate trace. In Canada, the single-trace and the tandem are the formations used.

The three men went hunting to-day. Odarpi had no luck. Kristian brought home two seals and Mikidi one only.

'I harpooned him,' he told us, 'and he dived and took the float down with him. And it was the float that brought him back to the surface again.'

'Is the float able to bring up all seals like that, even large ones?'

'Yes, except narwhals, sometimes. But a great many floats are lost. Sometimes they come up to the surface again with the thong cut in two; a shark has eaten the whole bag of tricks. At other times they may come up with the thong, and at the end of that you see the point of the harpoon, and round the point there is the seal's flesh cut as though it had been done with a knife. I've seen that happen myself. The "makakayit" have cut it with their knives.'

'The "makakayit"? What are they?'

'Once upon a time we used to believe that they were exactly like little men, who lived in the sea. But we know now that they are half men and half fish. We have seen photographs of them in books that the Kratouna have.'

*Monday, 26th October, 1936.*

Adoption of passive resistance in Paris.

Attempt at formation of aerial route, Paris-Saïgon-Paris.

First performance of film *Four Men in Greenland* at the Edward VII.

(Press extracts added in December 1937)

I came here for the sake of peace and quiet and I have found what I sought.

The wind was blowing through my window. I made a shutter of planks which could be fitted over the panes

and thus serve as some protection against the wind. I sawed the planks, nailed them together, put latches where required; then I made the final adjustment, and stepped back to see the effect of my work.

On the upper plank, in large thick lettering hardly yet effaced by dirt, appeared the legend 'Lons-le-Saulnier'. After some consideration I removed the nails from the plank and turned it round! And now that the shutter was finally fixed, my hut had taken on the appearance of a railway station or a toll-office.

When the Eskimo have spent the day in gazing at the busy life on board the Danish boat which comes every year, you may hear them say:

'Those boats may not be bears, but at any rate they are just as exciting to look at.'

It is said of a man whose tendon Achilles is dirty, that he will see many bears during the year.

Tigayet was cooking rice over the ounakrit. Everyone received a portion, myself included; but as the hunters had not yet returned she put some of it aside in a bowl which she hid under the platform nearest the lamp.

Kidimani, lying flat on her stomach on the platform with her arms over the edge, was pilfering rice with a spoon. Little Tsetây came up behind her and gave her a push. Kidimani thereupon lost her balance and fell into the big basin filled with urine for tanning skins; and for a moment there was nothing to be seen of her but her little legs writhing about like salmon in a net.

Kristian brought home two seals, each of which bore a large bullet wound. In former times, such wounds were believed to have been caused by kicks from bears.

Formerly, whenever the death of a man took place, every member of the establishment left the hut, which was emptied for three days of all its contents – especially every

article made from skins – with all possible speed. This was followed by the observance of a series of taboos of every nature. The same procedure was observed in the case of an impending birth; and no one was permitted to return to the hut until it was definitely ascertained that the child would live.

It may here be noted, as a curious fact arising from these practices, that they were also followed in all instances of the deaths of dogs, or births of puppies. In this case the taboos were not observed; but in all other respects the procedure followed was identical with that laid down for human beings. Dogs which had died were buried under stones in the same way as men.

Kara told us a story.

'She was a good-looking girl, fat, and she wore a large chignon. The men admired her. She used to buy beads whenever she could, to make herself look pretty for Tsakrizimet. She was his and his wife Timiartitsak's servant.

'One morning the men got ready to go out hunting. She took away the skin which was hanging up to dry over her platform, rolled it up carefully, and put it down beside her. Then she put out all her skin jackets. They asked her where she was going, and she answered:

"I am expecting a child by Tsakrizimet. I don't want to go on living."

'Then she left the hut and went down to the umiak to get her jacket. But Tsakrizimet was there too, getting the kayak ready to go out hunting.

"Where are you off to?" he asked her.

"That's no concern of yours," she replied.

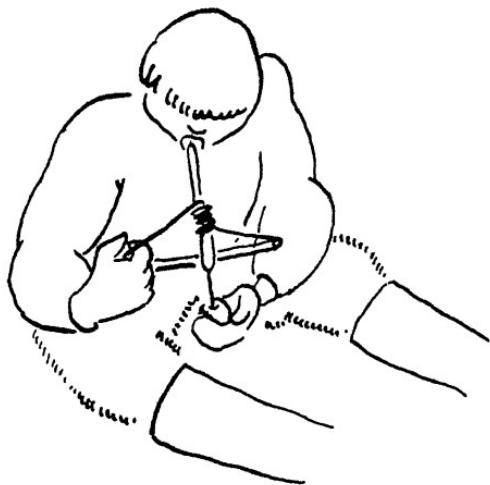
'Then he said to her "Are you angry?" and she answered that she was. He asked her why, and she said, "You know quite well why. And anyhow I only want to die."

'Then Tsakrizimet took her by the waist, but she struggled and made him leave go and started running towards the sea. So he ran towards the hut, shouting out that he hadn't been able to keep her back. Then everyone went up the hill, and they saw her floating about among the

ice blocks, and her jacket had got hitched up and they could see the whole of one side of her body.<sup>1</sup>

'And while they were clearing the hut of everything it contained as fast as they could lay hands on it, Timiartitsak's husband was giving her a terrible time because she hadn't been able to keep that poor unhappy girl.'

But Kara's stories did not end there.



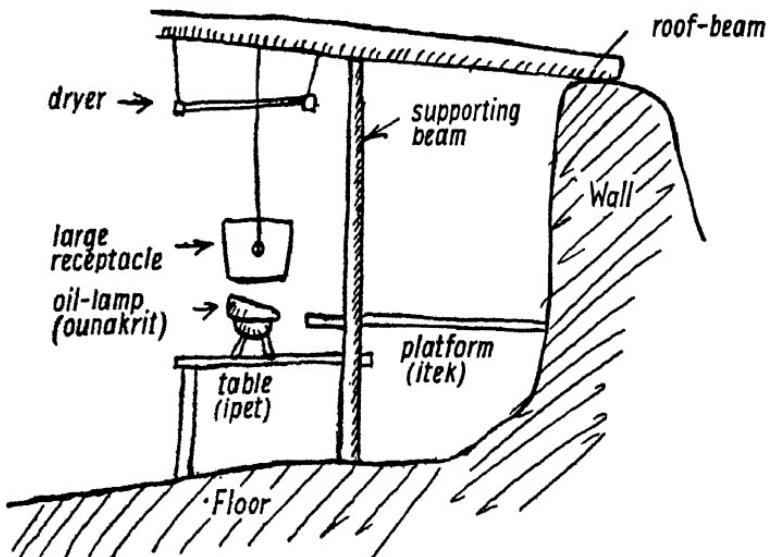
'Then there was Akkou's second wife,' she went on. 'She took a fancy to the young man on their platform. One night when she was lying beside her husband, he asked whether she thought the young man was nice-looking. But she didn't answer. Akkou wouldn't be put off, and asked her, "Why shouldn't he come and sleep with us?"'

'Then she sat up on the platform. She was practically naked. She took Akkou's kamiks which were hanging up under the dryer, put them on and went out like that, just as she was, without saying a word. The children went after her, and they saw her throw herself into the sea. Then they came running back to the hut. Yes, Akkou's wife

<sup>1</sup> There was no attempt at rescue, for fear of arriving too late and touching a dead body, which was a taboo.

threw herself into the sea. So, to get everything outside all the quicker, they even threw things through the windows which had seal's intestines stretched over them.

(1)



*section of an interior typical  
of the Eskimo or Angmagssalik*

'Kara's mother, in the summer before these two suicides, had overheard a conversation between these two young women. They were having a discussion to try and find out which of them would kill herself first. . . .'

Kroaserodidik was again giving me some anxiety. He had been refusing to take any food.

## CHAPTER VI

### FORTUNE FROWNS

*Tuesday, 27th October, 1936.*

Kroaserodidik,<sup>1</sup> with his chain drawn out to its fullest extent, was walking round in a circle with tottering footsteps like those of a drunken man. He could barely hold up his head, his eyes were clouded, and he dribbled.

All the dogs which made the crossing of Greenland with us were thin and depressed. The rest of them, however, on an exactly similar diet, were in good form. I could only ascribe all this to the fatigue of a journey made under very bad conditions.

2 p.m. I killed Kroaserodidik with a revolver. There was nothing else to do. The poor beast could no longer stand up. Still holding my revolver and with my arms hanging loose at my sides, I remained there for a long while standing by his body.

#### *A recollection*

An afternoon on the Inlandsis. Sky and earth alike were hidden, and all that could be seen was the snow as it was borne along by the wind. For many days past we had been living in this furious, persistent, almost animate curtain of white. At the height of the storm we killed four dogs and cut them up – animals which had been our companions and friends – driven to this extreme course in order to save the food required by animals which had become useless, and to provide fresh meat for the others.

<sup>1</sup> He who wears a collar.

We were driven to it, I say, but oh! with what heart-burnings and sorrow.

Necessity, sheer necessity, was our master. . . .

For the first time to-day the sun no longer appeared over the mountain tops. The whole of the fjord on the farther side, and the nearest icebergs, were bathed in sunlight; but the area on which it fell stopped short in front of my hut.

Anguinak was ill too. He would hardly consent to take some tiny pieces of fresh meat which I offered him from time to time.

In bygone days the treatment for headache was violent constriction of the head, around the temples, with a strap.

Nose-bleeding, which is very common here, was treated by dragging the patient by the hair until the skin became detached from the top of the head.

If a man was afflicted by ophthalmia, his forehead was cut above the eyebrows with a woman's knife until blood flowed.

*Wednesday, 28th October, 1936.*

I dreamed of Kroaserodidik, Krenerak, and Itlouwinak.

Large snowflakes were falling, and were immediately caught by a violent north-east wind. A storm was brewing. It was so dark that I was obliged to light my lamp at half-past one.

The Nekrayak (the north-east wind) is a male.

The Pittarak (the north-west wind) is his wife.

The Kadannek (the south-east wind) is their son.

And the Pouwanguartek (the south-west wind) is their daughter.

When the kadannek is blowing, he is said to be going to meet his mother.

In former times, when the nekrayak went on blowing too long, an old woman would go and lie out of doors,



MIKIDI



naked, to make him cease. When the pittarak blew, it was an old man who went out.

This evening a regular hurricane blew from the north-east. The nekrayak had been let loose in all his fury, stirring up huge waves which hurled great blocks of ice on to the shore, lifting them as though they had been corks. Our hut seemed to have been grasped by some invisible hand and jolted and shaken by it; and the noise was infernal.

'If the weather is bad, it's because you threw Kroasero-didik in the sea yesterday,' Doumidia said to me.

*Thursday, 29th October, 1936.*

Blocks of ice had been thrown up during the night as far as my hut. The storm had destroyed all the icebergs. There had been an enormous one anchored for nearly a month opposite the hut, but a few barely recognisable fragments were all that now remained.

For several days past one of Odarpi's dogs had been scratching and yelping all round the stake to which he was tied up. To-day Odarpi went up to this stake and listened for a long time. Finally, he heard sounds of wailing which came from beneath the ground at this spot. 'Like the oungâ' of little children,' he said. I myself could hear nothing; but Odarpi moved his dog elsewhere and its yelping was heard no more.

Atlalik – the spotted dog – who was eating heartily yesterday, to-day refused to touch any food. Within the space of two days he had already grown thin; and whenever he got up, he tottered and walked unsteadily. What on earth was happening to my dogs? I decided, however, that I would not kill Atlalik, hoping that he would make a natural recovery. I wanted to give him a chance.

I went out after ptarmigan with Mikidi. We were plunging into fresh snow up to our waists. On our return I found

<sup>1</sup> *Oungâ* – an onomatopoeic representation of the crying of small children.

Atlalik with eyes wide open and staring, his legs stiffened, and hardly breathing at all.

I killed him by the water's edge. A mere kick sufficed to push him into the sea amongst the blocks of ice carried in by the waves.

It was horrible. I had a bad fit of depression. . . .

*Sunday, 1st November, 1936.*

There was still not a trace of ice to be seen anywhere on the horizon. My companions could not remember any previous year in which it had been so scarce. Two years ago at this time we had already long been walking about by moonlight on the ice on the fjord at Tasissaq.

Maratsi, the great angakok, was sitting one day on the platform, forging a point for a harpoon, with little taps on the iron. One of his spirits, which slept under the platform, was annoyed at being awakened and plunged a knife into his back. The knife entered between his shoulder-blades and came out at the side of his breast-bone; blood spurted out and a great roll of flesh was displaced. Without being in the least disturbed, Maratsi placed his hands over the wound, rubbed it a little, and cried out repeatedly, in accordance with the rite prescribed in such cases, 'Ayaya-yaya. . . .' The wound was healed a few moments later, but the roll of flesh protruding from his chest still remained. Maratsi, feeling that it did not exactly improve his appearance, thereupon severed it with his knife.

Every occupant of the hut was a witness of this scene.

When Odarpi was a little boy of five years old, he used to watch his father smoking every evening a large pipe which he had bought at the trading centre, which had a stem 'as long as both arms stretched out'. The father would then put a handful of tobacco in the porcelain bowl on which there were pictures of Kratouna, and sit down on his toumara and ask for his pipe to be lighted. Then he would begin to

smoke slowly, in silence, taking little puffs from time to time. He seemed to enjoy it so much that Odarpi longed to smoke himself also.

One day he asked his father:

'Why shouldn't I smoke your pipe too?'

Without a moment's hesitation, his father handed him the lighted pipe and Odarpi smoked it until it was finished. He was sick at the back of the platform, and for several days his desire to smoke was effectively quenched. But soon, seeing how much his father appeared to enjoy smoking, he wanted to renew the experience; but he dared not ask permission.

He then began to sulk, and spent a whole day lying on the platform and refusing even to eat. When evening came his father asked him what was the matter; and not until then did he confess that he wanted to smoke again. His father thereupon cut off a piece of tobacco for chewing, and handed it to him, and he chewed it. His age was five years.

*Tuesday, 3rd November, 1936.*

The bear is sometimes called 'he who walks'; and the dog, 'he who runs'.

While they were still young, Odarpi and Kara lived at Ikateq. One evening they heard sounds of scratching on the roof of the hut, all the dogs being tied up at the time. Kara and Odiné then went out to investigate. On the roof they saw a crow, which they drove away; but a few moments later the crow entered behind them through the passageway. Odarpi and his father drove it off and then went outside with their guns. But the crow had disappeared.

That same evening it reappeared at Tasissaq, at Kulusuk, and at Norsit. It could not therefore have been a real crow, but must have possessed only the form and appearance of one.

'If it had come right into the hut,' Odarpi explained to

me, 'it would have swelled and got bigger and bigger, and in a few minutes it would have filled the whole place and stifled everybody who was there.'

*Thursday, 5th November, 1936.*

My companions' views on the subject of dogs differed from my own.

Here is a summary of their observations.

'A small dog and a large dog eat the same quantity of food; there is no need to give a big dog more to eat than a little one.'

'The single trace is mere folly. We and our forbears have used the "fan" from earliest times and we know what we are about.'

'Kroaserodidik was ill. Inero caught the illness from him because they were tied up together. Inero gave it to Atlalik. You killed Atlalik in time and threw him in the sea; and that explains why Anguinek is still alive and no other dogs have fallen ill since.'

'Last winter, while sick people were dying, the dogs were in good health. Wherever there was a settlement, as soon as the men got better the dogs fell ill. That means that the men passed on their illness to the dogs.'

'As in the case of men,' I told them, 'a small dog eats as much as a large one. But this depends to some extent on individual temperament. For example, the nagortsak (Robert Gessain) can eat the same amount every day, and more even than is good for him. But he will always remain thin.'

'Yes,' Kristian said, 'but the nagortsak is a Kidazimader.' 'Kidazimader' is said of a dog with a hole in its stomach.

'Perhaps it is because the Padasi<sup>x</sup> is like that himself,' Kara remarked to Doumidia.

'Like what?' I asked.

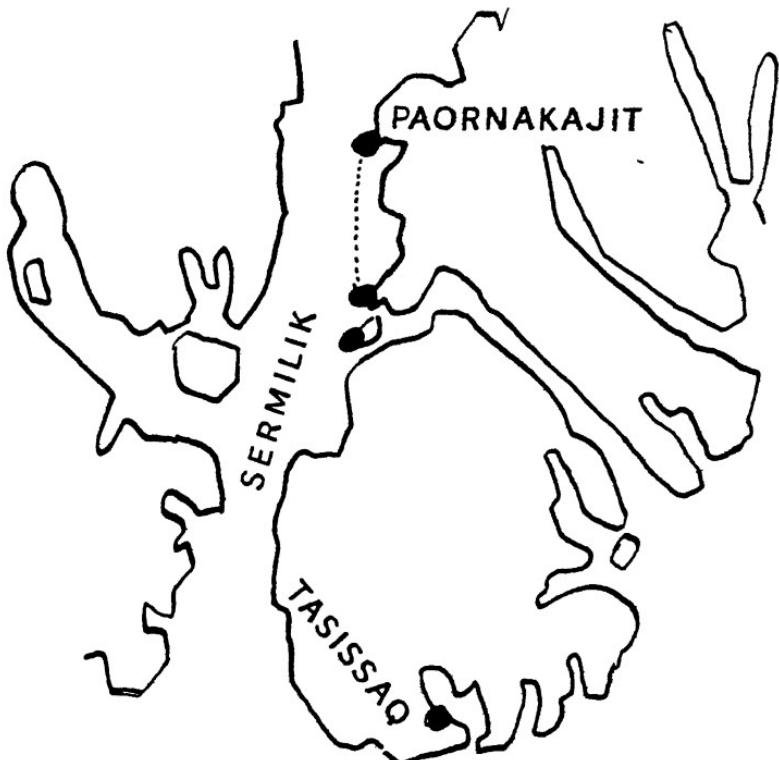
<sup>x</sup> The pastor.

'Perhaps he wants to know which of us he can catch out. . . .'

'But tell me, Kara, why do you say that?'

'Because he told Kristian to keep an eye on you and to tell him anything he saw.'

'But, Kara, that is because I am a Kratouna, surely!'



'Yes,' Doumidia put in, 'he said that to Kristian on your account. But he says it to many other people besides – to Eskimo about other Eskimo. If he sees a boy and a girl together he has them watched, and that happens to all of us. His brother wasn't like him. It's disgraceful of him, because it only teaches people to tell tales. . . .'

At the death of Tipou, Nielsi's first wife, a strange, widespread gleam of pale light came down from the sky, penetrating the dark clouds which hovered overhead; it lasted for several hours, during which the mountains were no longer visible.

Last winter, at Paornakajit, nearly all the occupants of the hut died. Matsidita died first, then her old husband Padousi. Throughout the night which followed Padousi's death his youngest son read prayers continuously. He himself was not ill.

At daybreak he closed his book and recited Adâdarpout Kridiamiousoudit ('Our Father which art in Heaven'). He was seated at the back of the platform. He raised a finger and said 'I see two angels' - and died.

'He was not ill,' Kara declared with much emphasis.

*Friday, 6th November, 1936.*

During the night, first one dog and then two were yelping with short, sharp barks. We went out, and the light of my electric torch revealed Kradibazok<sup>1</sup> and Kratounarayik<sup>2</sup> yelping with their heads turned in the direction of the hill. Everyone was terrified and returned to the hut, whispering one to another that the dogs were barking in the direction of the tomb where lay the old woman who died the other day.

*Saturday, 7th November, 1936.*

*7 o'clock in the morning.* It was still dark, or nearly so. Mikidi, barely awake, recounted a dream which he had had. A man from Sermiligaq had paid him a visit during the night and told him that everyone who lived in the country away towards the south was dying; and that the number of deaths last year was nothing in comparison with that which would be reached this year.

There was general consternation.

<sup>1</sup> The painter.

<sup>2</sup> The little Kratouna.

There was no more water in the mountain torrent which flows behind the hut, which was frozen. Gâba and Yosepi searched for water elsewhere. On their return they told us in tones of alarm that all the snow surrounding Yoanna's tomb was black.

In one of my canteens I discovered a purse containing a few 5-öre pieces. I gave one to Yosepi, one to Gâba, and another to Doumidia. There were shouts and cries—not of joy, but because these small metal fragments were as strange and unexpected to them as they had been to me.

'That will mean three people at the trading centre,' they said.

I made two sets of harness, one for Timertsit and another for Ekridi; and after that they looked like real little sleigh dogs.

I got out a sheet of paper and made 'my will'. I wrote it first in English and then in Eskimo, directing that all my books and papers were to be sent back to France, but that my clothing and provisions should be straightway divided amongst my different companions. This evening I read the contents of this paper to the three men, all of whom protested violently.

'It seems you never know what may happen here,' was Mikidi's comment.

*Monday, 9th November, 1936.*

Jim Mollison flies the Atlantic solo.

Divorce decree for Mrs. Simpson in London.

Miss Spain become Miss Europe 1936.

Edward VIII delivers his first speech from the Throne.

The Spanish Government leaves Madrid for Valencia. Fierce fighting continues in the streets of Madrid.

(Press extracts added in December 1937)

I was suffering from a headache which grew worse every day. My forced inactivity was tiring me, and there would be no end to it until the ice-pack was firmly enough settled to allow of excursions with the sleigh. The nights were steadily increasing in length, and it would soon even become impossible to read without artificial light.

Doumidia asked me:

'Have you written down the gramophone there, too?'

'Where?'

'On that paper over there?'

I had, in fact, pinned the paper on which my will was inscribed on one of the walls.

'No, I have not written it down there.'

'Why not?'

'If I were to die, there might be fighting over it?'

'Yes, perhaps there might.'

A brief silence followed, and then she asked me:

'Why did they read the paper?'

'What do you mean by that?'

'It seems somehow as if they were waiting, now.'

'As if they were waiting for what?'

'For you to die.'

I could not help laughing at this remark; but Doumidia replied, in a very serious tone of voice:

'Yes, but I don't like that at all.'

She stood there facing me, with drawn features, looking battered and crestfallen, and with tears in her eyes.

'Have you heard anything?'

'No, I have heard nothing.'

A further silence. Then I heard her say:

'Well, yes, I *did* hear something, several times. Only this

morning Odarpi was saying "When he dies, those boxes of little fish won't last long, you bet they won't."

'Why? Is he as fond of sardines as all that?'

'Oh, yes! They all love them. And Tigayet was asking whether you had written down on the paper what was to become of the gramophone; and several times they were talking about the food you still have left.'

After this statement I was lost for a moment in meditation. Five years earlier, Aguidi had killed his future brother-in-law with no further penalty attached to the crime than that of being debarred from the trading centre for a period of two years. His relations with those around him appear not to have suffered in the least. . . .

Well, the future would show. I might even get some amusement out of it. . . .

As was by now my daily custom, I went off with the sleigh at about ten o'clock. But to-day I made a new departure. With Kranorsouak, Tioralak, and Kijeviok, for the first time I took Timertsit and Ekridi also. As soon as we had started, Timertsit cheerfully buried herself in the snow, and as I pulled her up by the end of her trace she looked at me out of the corner of her eye and whined gently in an attempt to gain my sympathy. Ekridi's behaviour, however, was all that could be desired.

By the time we had arrived at the nearest lakes, Timertsit had grasped what was required of her and shot out on to the black ice almost without apprehension. Ekridi, however, was seized with giddiness and floundered about helplessly on her stomach. On our return, both of them had learned that the ice was no source of danger; and they galloped along as freely as the other dogs.

They were as proud and fearless as Kratouna.

Anguinek was ill again, with his tail between his legs and his coat greasy and dull. I took him off the chain and gave him some fresh meat, which he ate without relish.

*Tuesday, 10th November, 1936.*

Last night Kristian's two dogs broke loose and, dragging their chain behind them, dashed at Anguinek, who was too weak to defend himself, and slew him. This morning he lay behind my provision store, his legs stretched out and stiff, and covered with blood which had been drawn from every part of his body.

Inero and Arnatak were now the sole survivors of a collection of splendid dogs, the best and strongest that Jacobshavn could produce.

Odarpi's old bitch and her puppies slept beneath my platform, and I was frequently awakened by the old mother's growling each time that the puppies' pointed teeth nibbled too hard at her udders swollen with milk.

This morning I rose at seven o'clock, in complete darkness. Tipou was squatting on the floor, and light fell upon her from a piece of burning moss placed on a chamber pot at her side. With a seal's shoulder-blade she was picking up from the flagstones the little pieces of dung dropped by the puppies during the night.

*Wednesday, 11th November, 1936.*

During the night Kriwi saw a human being seated on her box, turning towards her with the head buried in the hands. It was probably Yoanna who was the cause of the vision.

Two days ago, it took fifteen minutes to return from the farthest lake to the hut; yesterday the time occupied was twelve minutes, and to-day less than eleven. My dogs were coming on.

*Thursday, 12th November, 1936.*

I am definitely opposed to a certain type of Christianity which has been practised to a certain extent in all parts of

the world, and especially in Polynesia and amongst certain of the Eskimo in Canada.

Speaking as a student of ethnography, I feel regret that the Eskimo here have not retained all their characteristics of former times. On the other hand I am bound to admit that Christianity has been the cause of one great moral advance here; respect for human life (though to a certain extent only). Less than fifty years ago murders were of frequent occurrence, the motives being for the most part vengeance or jealousy. To-day there are none, and this is due to evangelisation. It would, moreover, be difficult to point to a single instance of any disastrous result arising from incompetent teaching or failure to understand that teaching.

If the effects of Christianity on different peoples and civilisations have often been deplorable, that, in my opinion, is due to two causes.

First, the missionaries usually knew nothing of ethnography.

Secondly, the missionaries have rarely been masters of the language of those to whom they have been sent, with the inevitable result of misunderstanding on one side or the other.

In the early stages, those were the circumstances here. The first pastor was a Dane with an imperfect knowledge of the language, which resulted in failures on the part of the Eskimo to grasp his meaning. To give an example of this. Sunday was held to be a day of taboo, on which one should remain in a state of complete inactivity. When this pastor was succeeded by Father Rosing, an Eskimo from the West coast, the latter realised this and set matters right. (I am not claiming that he was more intelligent than his predecessor. But being an Eskimo, he could both understand and make himself understood, perfectly.)

Kara and the men were in my hut. I was telling them what I had just read in Stefanson's book, namely, that amongst certain of the Eskimo in Canada, Sunday is a

day so overladen with taboos that on a certain Sunday they waited impatiently for the arrival of midnight before starting out to search for a sleigh which had been lost in a snowstorm.

'They didn't understand,' my companions told me.

I also gave them an account of an angakok who had adopted Christianity and made a journey to Heaven, where he had had a long conversation with Yesousi-Kristousi, and the bird of God (the Holy Spirit). This journey was of a similar kind to those which he used to make in former days when he paid visits to the moon.

After hearing this story, my companions hesitated a moment, then looked at me and asked whether it were true.

'Well, that was his story, at any rate,' I replied.

'Then he was telling fibs. It wasn't true.' Then once more they reflected a moment in silence, and added, 'No, it certainly wasn't true.'

In the days of their childhood Odarpi and Kara were returning home one day accompanied by other children. They were having a happy time running about on the ice with a few grown-up people chasing them; and amongst these was Isimak, an angakok. The latter suddenly pointed to something close to Odarpi and said, laughing:

'Oh! there's a little aguiwekrit.'

In an instant the children ceased playing and came to a dead stop, transfixed with terror. Their attention had been drawn to a species of goblin in the form of children. The aguiwekrit have large heads and large stomachs, the rest of their frame resembling a skeleton. The tounongadit have heads as black as the soot at the bottom of a pan used for cooking.

Boys and girls here sleep together, and everyone knows it. Formerly, while little importance was attached to this, it used nevertheless to be a subject of conversation, and some occasion for merriment. Nowadays it is no longer

discussed, though it still causes mirth. It continues to be regarded as a matter of no consequence.

*Friday, 13th November, 1936.*

The following is a quotation from Thalbitzer<sup>1</sup>:

'During his cruise in 1899, Amdrup landed at Nualik ( $67^{\circ}15'$  North), and there discovered "the House of the Dead". He saw a number of skeletons, and some tools and weapons in good condition; and he then remembered that Rulm had told a story of two oumiaks which had gone northwards from Angmagssalik about the year 1882 and had never been heard of since.'

'In the following year Amdrup returned to the same place, coming this time from the North, and made a further examination of the House of the Dead. At Angmagssalik some old men to whom the weapons had been shewn declared that the occupants of the House of the Dead were, in fact, the people who had gone northwards in 1882.'

'These people probably died from poisoning as the result of eating decayed meat.'

That is the account of the tragedy of the House of the Dead at Nualik, as given by Rulm and Amdrup. But I discovered that the Eskimo version was completely different. Kristian and Mikidi told me that Ouyawet (the name given by the Eskimo to the first Governor of Angmagssalik) used to relate the following facts in a hushed voice:

'The two oumiaks arrived at Nualik. But the men in them did not die of hunger, as is generally believed. They were shot. Ouyawet himself was with the boat and saw them. All the people at Nualik were killed by bullets from guns. They tried to escape, but a strange mirror held in the hand made them able to be seen, even when they were hidden behind a hill. And Ouyawet himself saw two men running away, and when shots came after

<sup>1</sup> *Meddelelser om Gronland*, Vol. XXXIX, p. 344. 'The Ammasalik Eskimo'. Thalbitzer.

them Ouyawet saw these two men disappear into the earth.'

'I feel certain,' I said, 'that Ouyawet never told such yarns as that.'

'Oh, but he did,' Kristian and Mikidi insisted. 'He said also that they had killed everyone except the women who were carrying a child in their hood; they took pity on them. And not so very long ago, about ten years perhaps, Pavia, Inouk, Yadima, and Mougak went in an oumiak to Kialinek and Nualik. When they were there they rebuilt an old house that had fallen down. Tigayet, who was a little girl then, was with them. As soon as they had taken away the earth and the beams from the roof they discovered human bones and skulls heaped up on the platform below. The skulls of a woman and her child were lying on the little platform that was over the entrance passage, and they were covered over with a bear's skin that had been soaked in blood. There were still little pieces of skin and some hair on the skulls. Nearly all the skulls were cracked, but you could still see traces of bullets on the foreheads of some of them.'

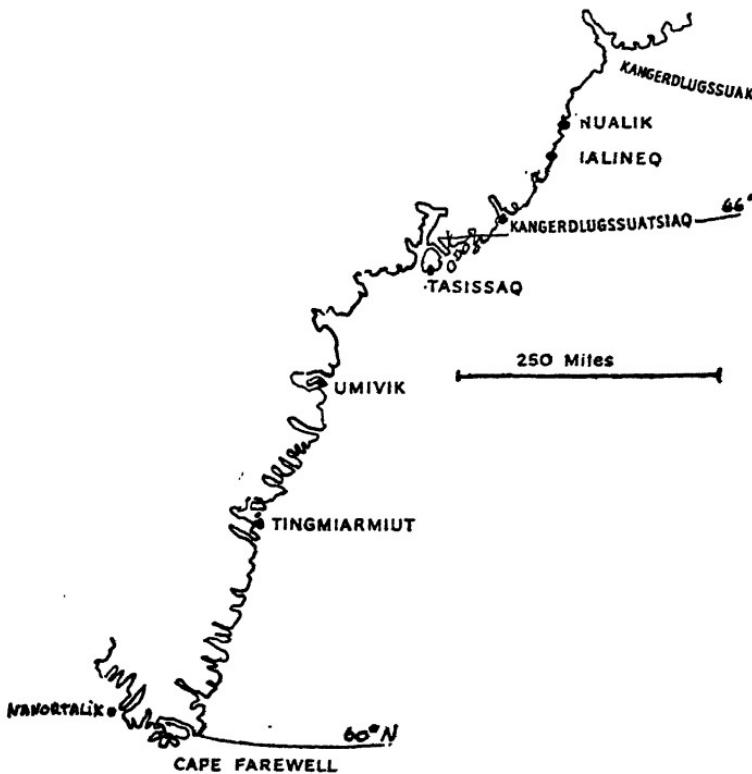
'At the entrance to the passage there was also the skull of a dog which had been pierced by a bullet. Nougak actually found a large quantity of bullets, and among them there were some quite new ones. There were so many of these bullets that his jacket in which he had put them was too heavy to carry.'

'And do you know,' Kristian added, 'that soon after the Danish soldiers arrived (1884), before the big ship came for the first time (1895),<sup>1</sup> another boat arrived which had come from the North. On board this boat there was a dog which everyone, Maratsi included, recognised as belonging to one of the men who had gone off in the oumiak some years before. A small boat from this ship went to Sermilik, and when it came alongside everyone ran away.'

<sup>1</sup> The Danish Lieutenant Gustav Holm discovered the Eskimo of Angmagssalik in 1884 as he was journeying up the East coast in oumiaks.

The Danish Lieutenant Amstrup came to Angmagssalik in 1895 with 'a big ship', and set up the earliest houses on the Danish station.

Then one of the soldiers put up his gun to fire, but another one, who happened to be the youngest brother of the chief, seized it from him. Amannta was the only person who didn't run away, and she began shouting and waving her fist. The men in the small boat took it to be a sign of welcome, and it was only then that they no longer felt inclined to shoot. They had got a habit of shooting at everybody, that's what it was. . . .



'Ouyawet was a great chief,' Kristian said. 'The father of the padasi we have now was afraid of him. One day the padasi and his wife were talking very fast and very loud. So he talked louder still, and the padasi and his wife stopped talking and went into a corner and cried.'

The pastor had given me an account a year earlier of the two following incidents:

In 1930, a detachment of the German expedition under Wegener was at Scoresby Sound. They were accompanied by two Eskimo from the West coast. (This is an important factor in the story, these Eskimo being completely devoid of superstition.) They had taken up their quarters at the head of the Sound, on the north side.

One day these Eskimo were overtaken by darkness, and hauled up their kayaks on the shore, a considerable distance above sea-level. They spent the night in their tent. The following morning, as they were on the point of departure, they noticed that one of their paddles had disappeared.

There had been no wind during the night. The paddle had been passed under the thongs of the kayak. The only possible explanation of its disappearance that occurred to them was that it might have been due to a fox. It was impossible that a man from the station should have been responsible, for they never came nearer this locality than a five days' journey by oumiak; moreover, it would never enter their heads to steal a paddle from a kayak, whether they knew the owner or whether they did not.

The two men went off in search of the paddle, each in an opposite direction. One of them, whose name was Frederik Bronlund, saw traces of human footsteps and thought that he had come across his companion's tracks. But when they met again shortly afterwards without having discovered the paddle, they were forced to the conclusion that they must have gone in exactly opposite directions and that their tracks could not possibly have intersected. On their return they found that not a single person, either in the Eskimo colony or the German camp, had been absent.

On the other hand, one of the Eskimo who had been searching for the paddle had been greatly struck by the behaviour of three musk oxen which had fled at his approach. These animals may not be hunted, and when

they move off at the approach of a human being they are accustomed to stop and look behind them from time to time, conscious of their immunity. These three musk oxen, however, continued to make off without any halt, in the manner of beasts accustomed to pursuit.

The second incident was as follows:

In 1932 – also at Scoresby Sound – Odi and Yosoua went off together in a kayak on a hunting expedition. Later they separated, and were afterwards caught by the wind. Odi made an unsuccessful attempt to land, and was driven farther and farther up the fjord until at last he managed to enter a small bay. There he saw a man, of very small stature, moving away from the water's edge. He called him, but the man would not look back. Odi had thought that the man was Yosoua, and was surprised at seeing no kayak.

On his return he learned that Yosoua too had failed to make a landing.

Here are two interesting passages which I have extracted from Thalbitzer:

1. 'A man still living told me (i.e. Gustav Holm) that his father had made a sleigh journey starting from North Aboudidek in the Kangerdlugssuatsiaq district. He discovered there a hut which had only just been abandoned by the occupants, who had departed with a sleigh; he could see by the tracks that they had gone in a northerly direction. He lay down in the hut to sleep, but during the night a knife was thrust at his leg. He returned with all haste to Aboudidek without having seen a single one of the inmates of the hut (1906).'

2. 'The descendants of those who moved to Kialinek penetrated as far as Kangerdlugssuatsiaq and settled down in a district even more remote. They are living there still.'

'During a short sleigh journey in the direction of the fjord, Kounnak saw traces of another sleigh. It is probable that there were some unknown people living still farther away to the North.'

May one infer from the above that there are Eskimo peoples as yet undiscovered?

In 1923, some Eskimo who had been seen by Clavering were frightened by the report of a musket and disappeared. Clavering had seen a tent with twelve occupants, and it is hardly probable that that tent stood in isolation.

I offer the following suggestion for what it may be worth: these Eskimo, alarmed at the arrival of white men, may have fled to the interior. Their main occupation would then be that of hunting on land (musk oxen, foxes, polar hares). They may have forgotten the art of hunting seals; and at the present day the sea may be for them a source of no less terror than the Inlandsis is for their compatriots at Angmagssalik.

I am aware, of course, that these suppositions are not based on any solid foundation of fact; but it is always pleasant to allow one's imagination a little free play. . . .

About the year 1890, there were two families living at Tingmiarmiut, the Atarida and the Kounitsarpik.

Atarida, who now lives at Nanortadik on the West coast, was an angakok. The two families were at daggers drawn. Kounitsarpik had a daughter who hunted in a kayak like a man; Atarida cut off her breasts and murdered her. The sequel to this event was the flight, in order to escape from Atarida, of Kounitsarpik and the whole of his family; and nothing more was heard of them. Atarida stayed behind with his own family, and then emigrated to the West coast.

For several years in succession, Samoedi and others who lived at Oumivik saw traces of unknown sleighs. Could these have belonged to descendants of Kounitsarpik?

*Saturday, 14th November, 1936.*

I wrote until two o'clock in the morning! I then went to bed as a measure of prudence rather than because I was sleepy.

There was a storm which lasted all night, with a violent north-east wind. The sea was raging, and blocks of ice as large as human bodies were hurled right up to my door.



ESKIMO IN A KAYAK



Akkou's mother died here, at Itiveq on the other side of the fjord. One day, now fifteen years ago, she was gathering bilberries when she lost her balance and fell. On the arrival of Akkou and some others she seemed as though she had been 'broken to pieces', but was still breathing and able to speak. Thereupon Akkou, her son, because he felt sorry for her and wished to put her out of her misery, threw her in the sea. . . .

In 1892, Kounitsi was living at Kringuek with his wife and children and his mother-in-law. In the spring of 1893 some people who had gone to Kringuek to fish for caplin<sup>1</sup> discovered that they were all dead. Kounitsi was by the entrance passage, wrapped in his kra with a thong attached to his feet.<sup>2</sup> He was dead; and the women must have taken him outside without having sufficient strength to bury him.

Everyone else in the hut was dead, lying stretched out as though they had been overtaken by sudden death. Kounitsi's wife was wearing only one of her kamiks,<sup>3</sup> the other being only half drawn on. She must have died suddenly, at the very moment when she was preparing to go out. Under some grass sods which had fallen from the wall, the youngest child, a baby still, was lying dead.

The most probable explanation of the tragedy is that the hut had been entered by a toupidek.

Amongst those who made the discovery were Ediaseri from Kungmiut, and the old woman Dôti. It was they who related how, a short time before the death of all those people, Kounitsi's son had found behind their hut a large piece of bear's fat, though they had neither seen nor tasted bear for many months. They were amazed – but they ate the fat. Something weird must have been going on in that place. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Each summer, when the caplin go up the fjord to spawn, the Eskimo of Angmagssalik assemble at the head of the fjord of Kungmiut, at Kringuek. They fish for the caplin with baskets or with tridents. It is generally an occasion of much rejoicing and festivity.

<sup>2</sup> A thong which enables the corpse to be removed without touching it.

<sup>3</sup> Sealskin boots.

A quotation from Nansen (*Farthest North*), Vol. II, p. 145).

'As soon as Yohansen had attended to the dogs, the sleeping-bags were unrolled and carried into the tent, which was carefully closed. We then slipped into our bags in order to melt our clothes. It was not a pleasant experience. During the day, the perspiration from our bodies had been gradually condensing in our outer garments, which finally became like a wall of ice. So hard and stiff were they, that if it had been possible to take them off they would have stood up by themselves. Each time we moved we heard them cracking.'

'Our clothes were so rigid that during our marches the sleeves rubbed my arms into large sores. One of these sores became frozen, and the wound grew deeper and deeper until it almost reached the bone.'

'Whilst we were in our sleeping-bags our clothes began a slow process of melting, and this involved an immense drain on the natural warmth of our bodies. We settled ourselves as best we could in our bags and remained lying there with our teeth chattering, for an hour or an hour and a half before we felt a little warmth return to our bodies — a warmth of which we were sorely in need. Finally, our clothes grew damp and their stiffness vanished. But a few minutes after we had left our bags in the morning, they froze again. During our journey there was no question of drying our clothes as long as the intense cold lasted, as the humidity from our own bodies was continuously undergoing a process of condensation within them.'

*Tuesday, 17th November, 1936.*  
Evolé II wins the Grand Prix  
d'Automne at Auteil.

Admiral Lacaze and Mgr.  
Grete elected members of the  
French Academy.

Illness of the Pope.

The door-keeper who married a  
sister of the King of Iraq obtains  
a divorce.

Lily Damita divorces her husband.

Marriage of Mary Pickford.

(Press extracts added in December 1937)

*8 o'clock.* It was still dark, or nearly so, and I was writing by the light of my hurricane lamp. Snow was falling, and there was consolation in this. In spite of all my hopes in the matter, which involved all the greater disappointment because they were so keen, there was still not a fragment of ice to be seen anywhere. Two or three icebergs were to be seen wandering about on a sea whose surface was otherwise as devoid of ice as the Mediterranean. I felt some anxiety regarding the prospects for the coming winter.

I had a dream due to the storm which was raging outside. I was asleep on the bench in my hut, and was awakened by the noise of my window being smashed into splinters. I thought that the wind had been the cause of this. I raised myself on my elbow, groped about for my electric torch, and moved aside the piece of white material which hung over my window (and served as a reflector when my lamp was lit). Thereupon I saw a bear, and the animal was smashing my window-panes with blows of his paw. Without getting up, I took down my Winchester which was hanging up over my head and fired point blank at the bear through the window.

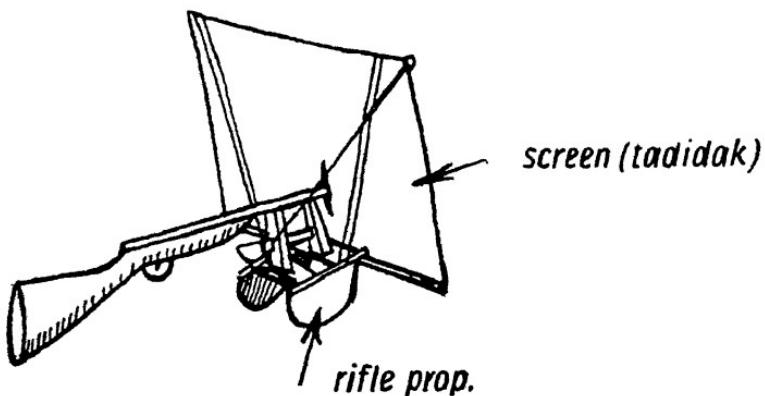
I busied myself with alterations to my Ice Cape sleigh, in order to adapt it to the prevailing conditions here, both on land and on the ice-pack.

Stefansson (1907) in his various works writes at great length on the Eskimo methods of hunting which were introduced and applied by himself and his men. He gives a special description of the method by which a seal which

is sunning itself on the ice is approached by means of crawling, and imitating a seal's movements. This was the method used by himself and his companions.

Stefansson evidently knew nothing of the *tadidak*, a screen of white material behind which the hunter is concealed, and which effectively baffles the seal. The use of the *tadidak* has long been known to the Eskimo of the West coast, and to those on the East for at least fifty years.

The children played at blind man's buff, but in a form only used among the Eskimo and by the Boy Scouts; the eyes were closed and no bandage was used.



Mikidi joined in the game. With out-stretched hands and arms he groped about this way and that, searching all the time. From every platform, chamber pots were held out, and Mikidi uttered loud cries each time that he came opposite one of these; but he kept his eyes steadily closed. He was a good, hearty player.

I was becoming more and more convinced that the range of mountains in the hinterland, as far as Mount Forel (an unknown range which extends for about a hundred kilometres), could be easily explored. Kristian, whilst out bear hunting, had often found himself at the edge of

glaciers within the range; and the map<sup>1</sup> provided further evidence that the route should not present any overwhelming difficulties. I was quite satisfied in my own mind that it would be possible to reach the foot of Mount Forel within a two, or possibly three days' sleigh journey without exceeding the normal hours of travel; one would only need to await favourable conditions.

I decided that if I undertook this exploration, it would be Kristian whom I should take with me.

In spite of what Stefansson has to say on this point, I am still of opinion that better results are obtained with a good Eskimo than with a white man (excluding, of course, the scientific side of an expedition). In all matters relating to dogs, sleighs, and camps (and these are of primary importance in any expedition), my contention is beyond dispute.

If the track which ascends by way of Sangmileq is a good one, I fail to understand why the English did not take that route, and why they attempted to reach this district by way of glaciers which appear to present considerable difficulties (and which, moreover, were the cause of their failure).<sup>2</sup>

3 p.m. It was pitch dark. The temperature in my hut was 48°, and I had no inclination to light the small stove.

Timertsit and Ekridi had grown so fat that their ribs and their two thigh-bones were entirely hidden.

The two puppies followed me about as closely as my own shadow; each time I stopped they would thrust themselves around or between my legs; whenever I moved or walked, they went just sufficiently far ahead of me to avoid collision between the toe of my boot and their own hind-quarters, watching me all the time out of the corners of their eyes. They might almost have been said to be following me in front.

<sup>1</sup> A map made in 1935, from photographs taken from the air, by the Institute of Earth Measurement in Denmark.

<sup>2</sup> Second Watkins Expedition, 1932-3.

5 p.m. The weather outside was wretched. The snow was falling thick and fast, there was a violent wind, and it was pitch dark.

I asked Yosepi to go and feed my dogs. The weather had robbed me of any particular inclination to do so myself; and good progress with my studies, for which I was feeling in good form, made me still more reluctant. Yosepi pulled a long face, but said that he would go. Feeling a trifle ashamed of myself, I said that I would go with him, and asked him to wait for me.

'Don't bother. It isn't very pleasant in here just now, and when I get outside I shall begin to enjoy myself,' was his reply.

One day, twenty years ago, Tsanbangak,<sup>1</sup> who had been in a kayak which had capsized, asked Erekro<sup>2</sup> to perform a magic rite which would effectively prevent any repetition of the accident.

They went off together into the mountains, one of them carrying a round piece of ice and some climbing plants, and the other a human skull and some seaweed. Having arrived at a very deserted spot, the one who carried the block of ice placed it on the ground facing the skull. On the block of ice they put the climbing plants, and on the skull the seaweed, to represent hair. The two heads then faced each other like a pair of adversaries in a singing contest.<sup>3</sup> The two men, having made certain incantations,

<sup>1</sup> The bead.

<sup>2</sup> The elbow.

<sup>3</sup> When two Eskimo had a matter to settle in which their honour was at stake, or were jealous of each other, or indeed had any great difference of opinion, they fixed, several months in advance, a date for a meeting. This meeting frequently took place at Kringuek, at the time of the great assembly for caplin fishing. During these months each adversary composed a poem in the form of a song, on which he expended the best of his wit and imagination and endeavoured to place the other in the most ridiculous light possible. When the day arrived they faced each other surrounded by crowds of people many of whom had come from a long distance. They sang alternately, accompanying themselves on the *krida*, the flat tambourine characteristic of Eskimo culture. And they also struck each other with their cheek-bones. The winner was the man declared by the audience to have made the better display of cleverness and of wit.

then began to yell at the top of their voices. From that day onwards Tsabangak never again capsized in a kayak.

A long time before the War, a Norwegian whom the Eskimo called Nediten spent several days here and photographed 'everything' and bought 'everything'. Izer-padiwa, Tigayet's grandmother, came to sell him an old and worn-out cache-sexe. He looked at it, sniffed at all the seams, sniffed again, put it aside, and then took it up and sniffed it once more before packing it up.

In former times, singing contests were not mere revelry and fun, and the adversaries' blows at each other with their cheek-bones were intended to hurt. Apropos of this, Kristian told me the following story.

Two men met one day for a contest. One of them was much shorter than the other, and the taller man thus had a serious advantage, as his cheek-bones were beyond his adversary's reach. The shorter man then gave him a violent blow with his cheek-bone in the stomach, which bent him double. Seizing his opportunity, the little man got in another heavy blow on the chin which knocked him out.

I was eating little, with the result that I felt very well and was seldom sleepy.

At this time all the ounakrit were usually extinguished at 9.30, after which I read by the light of my hurricane lamp until 10 o'clock or 10.30. I would then put out the lamp, and for long afterwards I would hear the regular breathing of my companions in the hut as they lay asleep.

Beneath the platform on which I myself slept were Odarpi's little puppies, sucking, growling, fighting. Sometimes the dogs outside made such a din that I was compelled to go out and soothe them.

Every morning I would wake at about half-past five, when it was still dark as pitch. It was not until later, when a faint glimmer of light appeared towards the South, that the dogs began to stretch themselves, bark, and drag at

their chains. Each morning too - in accordance with their own request - I woke my three companions at daybreak. I was always up before them.

*Wednesday, 18th November, 1936.*

8 p.m. Tsoukoudayik died last night. He was the fifth of my best dogs to leave me.

On the morning of the previous day he had been at the top of his form and had come to me gaily and happily, with his tail wagging. At about one o'clock I had gone past and patted him; and he, as he was accustomed to do, lay over on his back for me to scratch his stomach. In the evening Yosepi came to tell me that Tsoukoudayik had refused his portion of seal's meat. The snow was falling fast. I went to see him, and he was lying curled up in a ball, but did not appear to be ill.

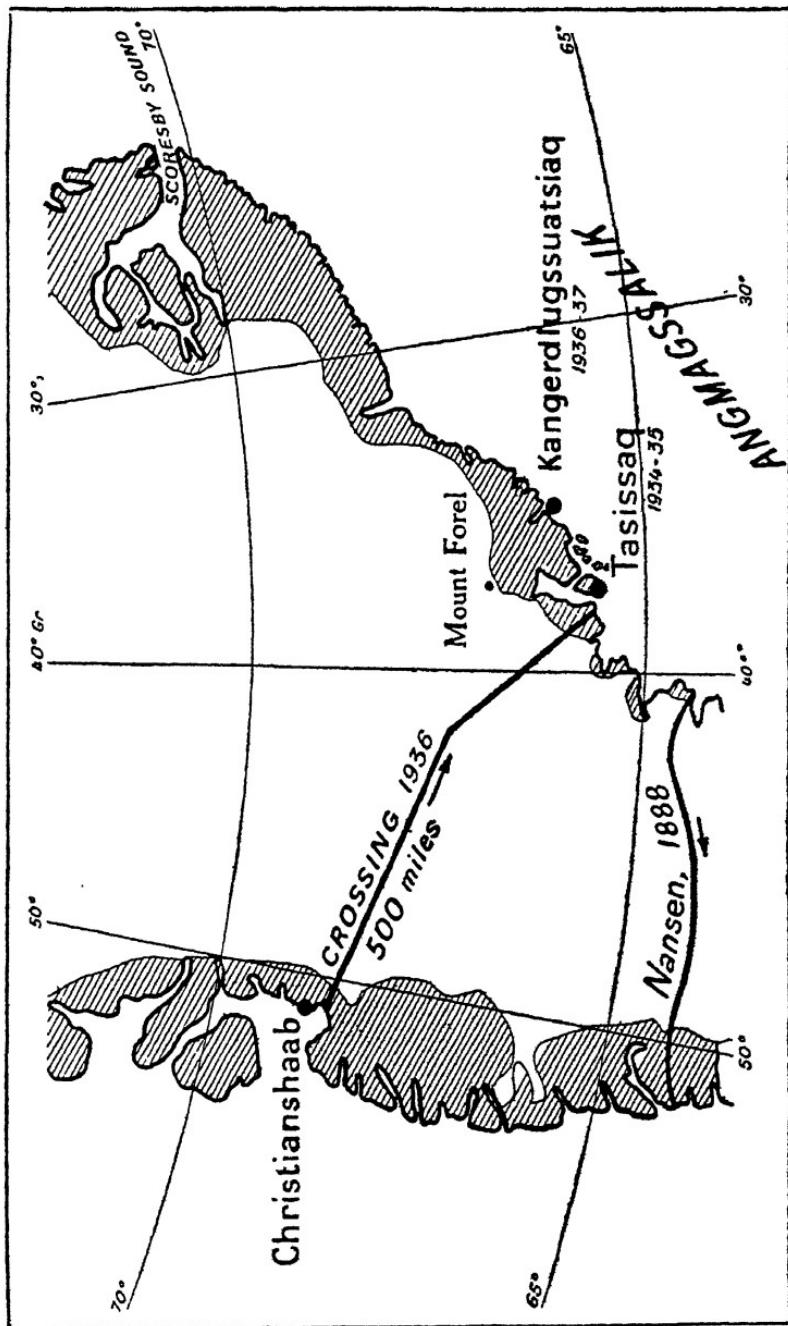
This morning, when I went out of the hut I saw him lying on the ground with his legs folded back and looking as though he were asleep. But he was dead.

10 p.m. Kara was skinning Tsoukoudayik. There were two holes in his stomach large enough to take my little finger. Some bones must have perforated the wall, and to judge by the holes it must have happened a long time ago.

In 1888 Nansen started from Oumivik for his crossing of the Inlandsis; and it was by Odarpi's father, who was spending the winter there, that he was received on that occasion.

When the Danes came in 1895 to found the colony at Tasissaq, they reported that Nansen had abandoned his guns and a large number of cartridges in the vicinity of the Ice Cape. Odarpi's father, when wintering again at Oumivik, made a search for these guns and cartridges but could not find them. For several succeeding winters, however, he heard numerous gunshots farther inland.

'It was the Timertsit who had taken them,' Kara said.





Fresh-water ice an inch and a half in thickness would bear a sleigh for horse traction. A piece of this ice dropped from about the height of a man breaks like a piece of glass.

Sea-water ice of similar thickness would be barely sufficient to support a sleigh for dogs; and a fragment of this ice dropped from a man's height is also smashed to pieces.

*Thursday, 19th November, 1936.*

'Now we really *have* got some good fat for healing,' Odarpi said to me this morning. At the same time Kara drew my attention to the top of Tabita's head, on which crusts had been forming for three weeks past.

'What fat?' I asked.

'What you gave me yesterday.'

'What!'

'The fat you gave me yesterday for your sealskin trousers.'

The preparation in question had been shoe polish. . . .

'Now that's what I call real medicine!' Thus Odarpi summed the matter up.

Kristian asked me who had invented the aeroplane. I told him that many people had contributed to that achievement.

'Yes, but which one managed to make it fly?'

'A Frenchman, a long time ago. He is still alive and everyone knows him.'

'Has he a wife?' Mikidi asked me.

'And how many children?' Doumidia added.

A quotation from Birket-Smith (*Caribou Eskimo*, 1929, Volume I, p. 58).

'The Crees (an Indian tribe) call the Eskimo<sup>1</sup> "askimawak", a combined word meaning "those who eat raw meat". (Petitot in 1879 gives the version "ayiskimewok" – "those who act secretly".) The etymology of this word was disputed by Richardson, who interpreted it as "those who

<sup>1</sup> Universal phonetic spelling.

mew". According to Thalbitzer, the word appears for the first time in the form "excomminquois", "excomminqui", or again, "escoumions", in a Report of the Jesuit mission (*Nouvelle France*, 1612-4).

'The designation in its present form does not appear until about the year 1700.'

This last statement is in any case incorrect, since the word 'Esquimaux' is found in Hakluyt in 1584, and 'esquimaux' appears in the Jesuit report of 1640. Thalbitzer assumes, from the earliest form in which the word appears, that its meaning is identical with that of the French word 'excommunié' (excommunicated). I have discussed this theory with Mgr. Turquetil, who as a Frenchman and a Catholic prelate is eminently qualified to give a ruling on the point. In his opinion, the etymology in question is impossible. From a philological no less than from the ecclesiastical point of view, the term 'excommunicated' is applicable to Christians only.

Furthermore, if we take into account the fact that 'askimavok', of which the singular is 'askimau', is a word in use amongst the Crees and an Indian word both in root and formation, and that corresponding terms are found in other Algonquin dialects, it seems unnecessary to search elsewhere for an etymological origin.

Amongst the Cariboo Eskimo it is the custom to smear the wooden runners of their sleighs with mud which they themselves make by mixing crushed earth with water; this mud has almost the consistency of putty. This covering freezes, and every morning water is poured over it which freezes again and makes an extremely slippery surface.

*Friday, 20th November, 1936.*

The alterations to my sleigh were making good progress. I was eager to test the new system I had devised for rapid harnassing, which promised to save much time, both on arrivals and departures.

There was a superb alpen-glühn at midday, when Kristian and I started off with the sleigh for the valley of the lakes. We were able to reach the top of a hill from which we obtained a view of the sea; but with the exception of two icebergs there was not a trace of ice to be seen.

Mikidi killed a crow which he gave to one of his dogs to eat. Little Kerti brought me the crow's foot attached to the end of a switch, and by means of a string fixed to each of the two tendons, the foot could be opened and closed as though the bird were still alive.

There is a great difference between the dogs here and those of the West coast. Apart from that of size (they are smaller), the Angmagssalik dogs are undoubtedly faster and more 'schlittenwillig'.<sup>1</sup>

If any one of us shows signs of being about to get ready a sleigh, all the dogs belonging to Mikidi, Kristian, and Odarpi begin to yelp and drag at their chains exactly as though their food were being brought to them. My own dogs remain quiet until they are fetched; and when they have been harnessed, wait with well-nigh perfect behaviour until the signal for departure is given.

I was thirsty. On the kitchen table there was a small aluminium pitcher filled with water. I got up and gave two turns to the pump at the stove. The manometer stood at 1 kg. 25, and the needle showed that there was still some spirit left. I had but to strike a match, and the water was quickly heated. Then I poured into a bowl a little condensed milk, water, and some ovomaltine. The mixture smelt good, and had a fine froth on it.

I sat at my table and wrapped my legs in my rug. The temperature was no more than 46°. Having made myself thoroughly comfortable, I took a sip of the hot liquid.

It was nasty beyond description.

I wondered whether I could have put in soda instead of

<sup>1</sup> A German word meaning 'adaptable to, with a taste for, a sleigh'.

milk, but a glance at the tin was enough to disprove this. Could the milk itself have fermented or gone bad? I put a pinch on my tongue and its taste was beyond reproach. I could not solve the riddle. I skimmed the liquid and took another sip — which was even nastier than the first. I decided that it was not the ovomaltine at all. . . .

Then, suddenly, I grasped what had happened. Doumidia had, as usual, cooked the seal in sea water, and the little aluminium pitcher had been its receptacle.

I had the hump badly to-day.

To-day for the first time I felt that I wanted to see another white man, to find myself in a house with central heating, to speak some language other than Eskimo, to eat something that was neither seal nor rice, to sit at a nicely laid table, and to have a bath. . . .

*Saturday, 21st November, 1936.*

I rose at half-past six, when everyone else was still asleep. Darkness would remain until about nine o'clock.

My sleep at that time was normal; and though I was eating very sparingly, I was all the better for it.

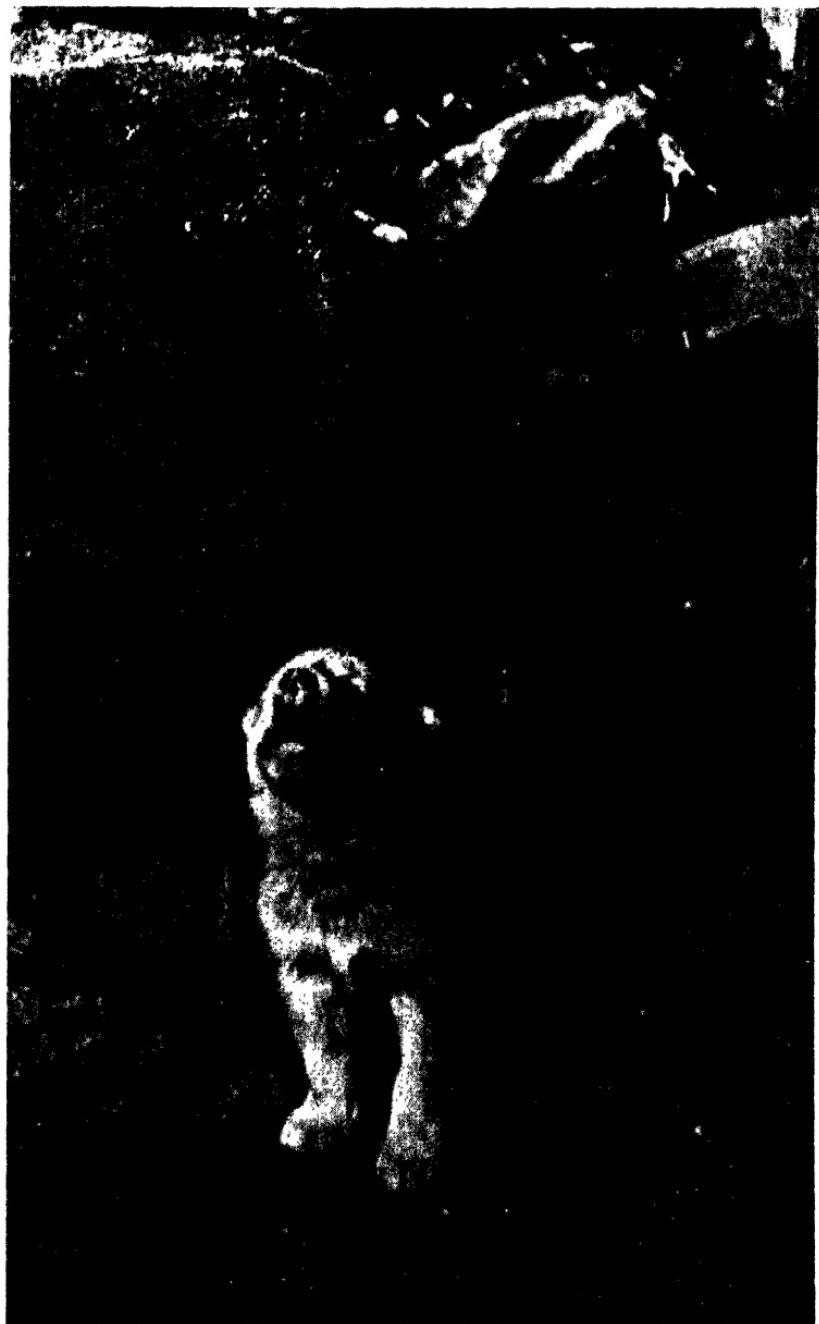
To-day, at half-past seven, I took three-quarters of a bowl of Blécao, with a small slice of sticky, doughy black bread; at five o'clock in the afternoon, three-quarters of a bowl of lentils (I gave the rest to Tipou).

My menu varied between seal and rice, seal and vermicelli, seal and haricot beans, or seal and lentils. Occasionally, but not often (since I was economical in these matters), I had recourse to a tin of Alsatian sauerkraut or a stew.

Everyone had learned how to say Thank you in French. But this form of courtesy was usually expressed by the word 'Ya-pa-de-koá'.

To-day I heard a child calling a little puppy: 'Yapadkoá! Yapadkoá!'

'Oh, but that's his name,' was the explanation given to me.



A FIT OF THE BLUES ...



To-day I made an expedition with eight dogs on a single trace – a cheerful omen. The start was made in magnificent weather, an almost windless day. On my return less than an hour later a violent north-west wind had sprung up, carrying the snow before it. I regarded it as a certainty that the three men who had gone off hunting would have been compelled to land and haul their kayaks ashore; and should they have put in on the farther side of Ikassakajik there would be no possibility of their returning that day. Tigayet, leaning back against the wall of my hut with her eyes steadily fixed in the direction of Arpertileq, was crying and whimpering, and seemed as though she were trying to induce another of her fits. However, a few hours later the three men arrived, having landed on this side of Ikasakajik. Mikidi had killed two seals; but the men had of course been obliged to leave everything behind.

*5 p.m.* The temperature in my hut at the level of my head was  $44^{\circ}$ , and at my feet  $28^{\circ}$ ; but thanks to my pull-over<sup>1</sup> of unscoured wool I did not feel cold. As for my feet, they were kept pleasantly warm by Ekridi and Timertsit, who were sleeping on them.

Tioralak had broken his collar, and in this happy state of freedom was sitting alongside Kiviok and smiling at him. Tekri came out of the hut on all fours, dragging his paralysed legs along the surface of the snow. Immediately he caught sight of this crippled being, Tioralak leapt up, yelped, made off with his tail between his legs, and disappeared behind a hill.

Whenever there is an accumulation of ice along the shore which prevents the men from embarking on a hunting expedition, there is an infallible remedy which

<sup>1</sup> These pullovers in unscoured wool are a striking example of the understanding of native requirements displayed by the Danes in their colonisation of Greenland. These garments, which come from Iceland, are sold at the Danish trading centre at a lower price than in Iceland itself, on the ground of their being an article of special utility to the Eskimo.

consists of placing inside a tomb a human skull covered with seaweed and a block of ice as nearly as possible the shape of a skull, and covered with climbing plants. This will always enable the men to start.

If there is a heavy swell or the sea is very rough, crushed sorrel must be thrown into it. The chances are then in favour of the sea being disgusted by the acid taste and becoming calm once more.

Whenever a shooting star is seen, that star is said to have diarrhoea.



*Sunday, 22nd November, 1936.*

This morning, after eating my porridge I took a piece of sugar and began to suck it. Doumidia thereupon held out her forefinger with the middle finger crossed over it. This symbol represents a woman carrying a child in her hood and waiting until someone gives her food.

Doumidia evidently wanted a piece of sugar herself.

Since my arrival I had occasionally played my gramophone record of Mozart's sonata for violin and 'cello, the Brahms Double Concerto in F, and a Prelude and Fugue of Bach. In the main hut (when I was not there) my companions often played the five or six records which I allowed them to use. Doumidia and Mikidi, whom I had entrusted with the instrument, took religious care of it, were scrupulous about wiping the discs, and replaced the spring with infinite precaution.

Mikidi said to me:

'We shall listen to the singing machine to-day, and once or twice after that, and then we shan't hear it any more.'

'Why?'

'We shan't hear it till Christmas; and then, when we do hear it again we shall enjoy it all the more.'

*Monday, 23rd November, 1936.*

Tekri was very fond of writing. I was continually receiving letters from him, asking me for bullets for his small rifle, a piece of black bread, or a pair of drawers. As I did each time they reached me, I was tearing up a note which I had just received.

'Four times is not enough,' Doumidia said to me. 'If you only tear it into four pieces you can read it again.'

Odarpi and Mikidi were seated in the hut, knife in hand, and cutting the few hairs which grew on their chins or beneath their noses. They were practically beardless.

'Give us some soap, Wittou,' they said. 'Then we shall be able to shave like you.'

In former times, when the two stars called 'Attit' appeared above the horizon, this event, which betokened the shortest day of the year, was made an occasion for festivity and rejoicing. An idiwitsi seal was hauled into the hut, and the night was spent in singing and dancing. All this took place between the 20th and the 25th of December. The new year began with the moon which followed the appearance of the Attit, that is to say, in January.

The most intelligent of all species of seal is the Kritediwa, and the only one to have noticed that men often appear with their backs to the sun. It thus happens that the older seals of this species are often discovered on the look-out for enemies with face turned towards the sun, however blinding the glare may be.

If this seal is harpooned, he becomes so enraged with himself at having failed to see the arrival of the kayak and allowed himself to be caught, that he claws at his own eyes.

The cork of my petrol-can was missing. I remarked to Kara that I had seen it the day before.

'He is not like a Kratouna now,' Kristian declared. I asked him why.

'Because you said "I saw it yesterday," just like that, quite calmly. A Kratouna would have talked and talked, as fast as he could, and he might have been angry too. And anyhow,' he added, 'you speak Eskimo nearly as well as we do ourselves. You are the only Kratouna who has ever spoken Eskimo as well as that.'

I smiled. Doumidia looked at me, came up to me and put her arms round my neck, rubbed her nose against mine, and said:

'My nice little Eskimo!'

## CHAPTER VII

### FAREWELL TO THE SUN

*Tuesday, 24th November, 1936.*

5.30 a.m. It was still night, but the darkness was relieved by a moon which was hidden somewhere in the heavens. Hearing the dogs bark, I sat up on the platform and looked outside. Large snowflakes were falling; and for the first time since we have been here, in the little bay the sea was as calm as a lake, its surface undisturbed by the slightest movement.

'What is it like outside?' Odarpi asked me. His heavy voice rolled forth from the dark cavern in which we, its twenty-five occupants, rested and slept.

6.30. One after the other the men went out into the night to take stock of the weather. Returning covered with snow, and sneezing, each went and sat down on his box.

8 o'clock. There was as yet but little daylight. Snow was falling, and the mist was so dense that the other side of the fjord was entirely hidden from view. The icebergs stood out in sharp outline against a background of unrelieved grey - a truly Polar landscape. The sea was calm, and the shore entirely free of ice.

8.30. The three men put on their skin jackets, securing them at the wrists, settled themselves in their kayaks, and started off. A white layer of snow was spread over the surface of the water, and in it the kayaks, as they moved forward, left long dark furrows.

A quarter of an hour later the men had returned 'on account of the wind'. But not a sound of it could be heard

here; the various noises in the hut had effectively prevented this.

Kriwi was sitting cross-legged on the platform, clothed in nothing but a pair of short drawers. On her knees she had placed a necklace with five pendants, made with the beads which I had given her for her birthday, and which now made a graceful adornment to the rounded flesh on which they lay. Tenderly, lovingly she passed her hands over the beads, and kissed them.

'Come here,' she said to me, 'and kiss my beads too.'

I had finished my investigations on the subject of the rights of priority in the apportionment of the seal, and had got the distribution of the various parts exactly defined. I then began a study of the methods of hunting, with all that that implies. By way of explanation Odarpi gave me a performance of the gestures of a hunter about to harpoon a seal. His eyes grew rounder and rounder, and he glared until his eyeballs seemed half ready to leave their sockets. He made a funnel with his hands, through which he peered.

'And after that,' he told me, 'the seal is the only thing you can see. It grows huge, enormous, and blots out everything else.'

Here is an odd story.

Nouzoukadiwet and his wife had long since exhausted their stock of tobacco. They were nearly at the end of their tether, were longing for more and had grown surly and peevish. One evening Bartodina suddenly remembered that, many months ago, Nouzoukadiwet had rolled some leaves of tobacco on his shin-bone (as a substitute for a board). Without a moment's delay, Nouzoukadiwet took off his trousers, seized his foot, and made an attempt to lick his leg. But he was very old and his limbs had grown stiff; and his efforts were accompanied by heart-breaking groans.

'I can't do it,' he said, on the point of weeping.

'Give it to me, then,' Bartodina replied.

Thereupon he held out his leg, and Bartodina, in order to enjoy once more the taste of tobacco, proceeded to lick it at her ease.

Nikidimousi was an excellent hunter and a very lordly person, with numbers of sealskins and many skins of bears to exchange at the trading centre.

One summer he ordered from Denmark a clock three feet high with a Westminster chime. When it arrived he could find no place in which to put it; so he made a present of it to the pastor's son.

It was Doumidia's birthday next day. For a whole week she had been sewing and washing in preparation for the occasion.

*Wednesday, 25th November, 1936.*

Explosion at Saint-Chamas powder-magazine (53 dead, 200 injured).

Fifteen hundred Japanese drowned by floods.

Whole district of Angers destroyed by fire.

Anti-communist agreement between Berlin and Tokyo.

(Press extracts added in December 1937)

To-day was Doumidia's birthday. Lying on the window platform, she had been stretching and yawning since day-break. She placed her feet, with her blanket rolled around them, on my sleeping-bag. She was fully aware that it was her birthday and was taking advantage of the fact from the very start.

8.30 a.m. I went into my hut and lit my hurricane-lamp, for daylight would not begin to appear until about ten

o'clock. I gave two or three turns to the pump at the stove, struck a match, and lighted up; and over the blue flame I placed a jug full of ice. The water was soon heated, and I should be able to wash.

It was at this moment that Doumidia appeared on the scene. She was still as drowsy as she could be, yawning, and bending her head forward. She stretched out her arms, put them round my neck, and placed her little round nose against my large bony one.

'Your nose is too big, and I'm going to wash,' she said.

'Why, of course,' I replied, 'and there is hot water too. . . .' So whilst I, resigned to its loss, sat down and began to write, she poured out hot water into the little basin.

'Don't look round,' she said.

'And may I ask why?'

'I don't want you to look at me while I am washing. It makes me feel uncomfortable.'

On to my bench there fell in succession her red and white jacket, her sealskin breeches, and her Scandinavian drawers with elastics everywhere.

Of course I turned round.

'Wittou!' she cried, turning towards the kitchen table and looking at me over her shoulder.

She had a good figure; and her legs were much longer than those of the other women, whose bodies are usually too long from the waist upwards, and their legs too short and inclined to bend at the knees. Meanwhile I continued my writing, to the accompaniment of sounds of splashing in the basin, from which drops of water found their way at intervals down my neck and on to my sheet of paper.

Then the door was opened, and Yosepi appeared.

'Shut it, quick!' Doumidia cried. 'You're letting in all the night air.'

'Well, when my birthday comes along,' Yosepi announced as he seated himself on my bench, 'I shall have a wash like that, too.'

Doumidia, who by this time had completely recovered

from all embarrassment, came and sat down beside me to dry herself.

'To-day, I shall dress like an Eskimo,' she declared. She put on her sealskin breeches and her kamiks which reached above her knees: naked to the waist, she combed her hair, damping it with an application of soap to keep it in place and add a lustre, parted it at the side, and finally made two plaits. Then she donned the blue and red jacket which Kristian had lent her, and over it she drew on her beaded cape.

Her festal adornment was complete. Her birthday was honoured.

*11 a.m.* Doumidia returned from a visit to the hut. Her eyes were shining.

'Ouma!' she exclaimed to me, 'Tekri has given me a moor-hen, and Paoda a skin.'

'What kind of a skin?'

'A sealskin - a real one.'

I gave a whistle of admiration.

*3 p.m.* Kristian and Odarpi had returned from hunting. Kristian came into my hut, and seeing Doumidia, said to her:

'You may choose which skin you like best amongst those I have. I'm a man and am no judge of them.'

Doumidia stared at him, and there were tears of joy in her eyes. Kristian, looking a little awkward, sat down on my bench, but rose almost immediately and went out without saying a word.

'That makes two skins for you,' I said.

'I have never been so rich in my life.'

*7 p.m.* I was making notes. Doumidia sat on my bench, day-dreaming, with her hands on her knees, and looking rather overburdened by her long kamiks and her sealskin breeches. Odarpi entered noiselessly with a skin rolled up under his arm; this he handed to Doumidia without

uttering a word. I myself had this morning given her seal-skins for her kamiks, beads for a cape, a pair of white woollen gloves, a large piece of dried raw seal's meat, and a plentiful assortment of ammasset.<sup>1</sup> She thanked me, but Kristian's sealskin was the gift which had given her the greatest joy.

Doumidia wrapped up in sheets of paper some fragments of tobacco for chewing, pieces of dried meat, and one or two caplins. Despite her protests I added some parcels containing ends of burnt matches, some empty tins, and a quid of tobacco which Odarpi had forgotten and left behind in my ash-tray.

All the occupants of the hut were crowded together in a circle on the platform. Kneeling with heads close together and arms outstretched, they shouted and yelled in eager expectation. Into the centre of this rabble Doumidia then hurled a seal's vertebra, and the noisy crowd was straight-way transformed into a seething, struggling swarm. A regular battle ensued, from which Mikidi, scratched and dishevelled, and brandishing aloft the seal's vertebra, emerged as victor. For this exploit he was given a tiny parcel, and the game went on.

The quid of tobacco, the match ends, all the catchpenny surprises were an immense success.

When the parcels were exhausted I added a tin full of treacle, and the grown-up members of the company then started a different game. They severally grasped a sealskin thong eight inches in length; and the tin would go to the person who succeeded in wresting the thong from the others. Five or six people, men and women both, began a slow, fierce struggle. In complete silence, the mass of human bodies was drawn slowly and painfully hither and thither over the platform, whilst everyone else, large or small, who was taking no part in the contest looked on in a state of great excitement. It was Kristian who finally

<sup>1</sup> Caplins. These are dried and kept as a reserve for the winter.

brandished the tin of treacle aloft after a struggle which had lasted for more than half an hour.

*Thursday, 26th November, 1936.*

An exciting event took place to-day. From the high point to which we had been going daily with the sleigh we saw a long white line which stood out clearly on the horizon. The ice-pack had arrived – at last! Unfortunately, the pittarak – the north-west wind – was blowing and would prevent the ice from reaching the coast that day. But as soon as it fell. . . .

Tioralak and Kiviok were now my leading pair for the sleigh, and the pace was considerably smartened thereby. But Tioralak, who was younger than Kranorsouak, was less experienced and also less obedient than he had been.

On our return from our daily journey the path descended between the rocks, from the pass as far down as the first lake. The dogs were accustomed to take a sort of sloping gully, at the head of which was a small knoll or mound, at full speed. It was a regular dive. The path led along the side of this hillock and then followed round it, with the result that the sleigh, travelling at top speed, first leaned over to the right and then, immediately afterwards, was drawn round to the left by the dogs as they dashed into the gully. When that moment came, I had to spring to the left, throw the whole weight of my body on to the left-hand runner of the sleigh to prevent its overturning to the right, and immediately recover myself in order to escape a violent collision with the rock which stood at the entrance to the gully.

The first day on which we made this descent, I followed my companions' example and hobbled my dogs by fixing one of their forefeet into the collar; after that, knowing the path, I allowed them every day to run as fancy took them.

To-day I arrived at the hillock running at top speed; and there I saw my dogs disappearing one after another. I sprang to the left; all was well, the sleigh had kept its

balance. I got past the hillock and saw that the sleigh was tipped over at a slight angle, which did not worry me, my mind being concentrated on the inevitable jolt when the sleigh resumed its normal position. I tried to lean over still further towards the inner side of the curve in which the sleigh was moving. The jolt duly arrived, but with such violence that I lost my hold and came crashing down — with the sleigh — against the rock.

I got up as hastily as I could, for Kristian, though he had hobbled his dogs for the descent, could not be far behind. But away below, at the farther end of the gully, my own dogs, with no sleigh behind them, were galloping along the track which led back to the hut. Their trace had snapped clean in two.

No power on earth could stop them. Shouts would have been useless. Had this happened on the ice-pack the situation would have been a troublesome, not to say a dangerous one. . . . I returned to the hut in tow behind Kristian's sleigh. . . .

Rasmoussi was squatting on a large piece of flat ice watching a seal, and relieving himself the while. Sidartszi, who hunted in the same district, caught sight of him, approached him noiselessly from behind in his kayak, and threw his harpoon which entered the ice beneath Rasmoussi's hinder parts. The latter took a leap forward; a yell of fear escaped him, and in mortal terror he fell prostrate on the ice. A considerable time elapsed before a faint utterance was heard.

'Kizigaynguina!'<sup>1</sup>

He thought that he had been attacked by a walrus.

*Friday, 27th November, 1936.*  
The ice had already approached nearer to the coast.

Mikidi was smoking a pipe which gave out a pleasant odour.

<sup>1</sup> 'What is that?' (with a definitely pejorative shade of meaning).

'It's because of the stem,' he said.  
'What is it made of, the stem?' I asked.  
'Of horn.'  
'Of reindeer's horn?'

'No! it's a piece of the horn of Pontousi-Pilatousi,' he replied.

The whole of the little Arpertileq fjord was frozen over, and Kristian went out after seals to-day on the ice. Prospects were good.

*Saturday, 28th November, 1936.*

The big Timertsit, the giant inhabitants of the Inlandsis, gave the angakout certain teaching on the subject of Greenland. They told them that in former times the country was not covered with ice as it is to-day. There were large trees and plants, and it was very hot. The country did not become ice-bound until an occasion when there were two succeeding winters without a summer in between; and it was only after that memorable time that Greenland became a cold country.

This teaching would seem to be borne out by the fact that in many places tree ferns have been discovered, showing that at some remote period Greenland had a vegetation and climate analogous to those of virgin forest. . . .

The art of the idigitsek (a magician acquainted with all the procedure of magic, but not an angakok) was taught for a great number of years. An idigitsek chose a young boy of thirteen or fourteen years of age who showed special intelligence, to whom, throughout the course of many succeeding winters, he revealed all the secrets of his art. All this had to take place in surroundings of darkness and solitude; and no one must be aware of the identity of either teacher or pupil. Everyone knew which were the angakout, but the personality of the idigitsek had to remain a secret.

His identity was only revealed if he should 'lose his reason'. An idigitsek 'lost his reason' if one of his magic

rites failed in its object, with a disastrous effect on himself, or if the toupidek created by him failed in its mission and turned against him. In these cases, an idigitsek could only save his life by confessing every murder he had committed; and the very fact of his confession robbed him of all his power.

In the event, however, of his keeping back some of his secrets and not making a complete confession, his doom was inevitable. He died then either because he had lost his reason, or else he was simply put to death. He was bound and laid on the platform or on the ground, and large stones were heaped on his chest until he expired. This ceremony was sometimes expedited by throwing him into the sea.

*Sunday, 29th November, 1936.*

The weather was fine. There was hardly any swell, and the surface of the sea was like oil. Some stray pieces of ice could be seen floating on the fjord.

Within the hut, the men were impatient to go out hunting; but as it was Sunday they were dressing up in their best clothes. Raising their arms, all three of them with one simultaneous gesture proceeded to place collars round their necks. Kristian's collar was of celluloid, and the back of it was torn: Mikidi's as white as snow, whilst Tekri's was striped in red and purple. Odarpi did not possess one. Every jacket was white save Kristian's which, as it was he who conducted the service, was black.

'Why are you all making yourselves so smart?' I asked.  
'Christmas is getting near,' was the reply.

When the service was over I said to Kristian:  
'As you are always in such a hurry to start out hunting,  
why should you not have the service in the evening, when  
you get back?'

'Because it would be wrong.'  
'Wrong? God has never said it would be wrong.'  
'Oh, yes, He showed us that it was.'  
'How did He do that?'

'Well, it was just a moon ago. We went off hunting on a Sunday morning, and we were obliged to come back on account of the wind. And again, a few Sundays ago we went out hunting without having had the service and each one of us had a blank day. God wasn't at all pleased with us. So it is really better to have the service first.'

*Monday, 30th November, 1936.*

When I awoke this morning, I had running in my head a catchword which was on everybody's lips last winter.

'Everything is going splendidly, Madame la Marquise.'

I burst out laughing, and all my companions thought that I had gone mad.

Seated on my bench and leaning against my table, Doumidia was showing some sealskin kamiks which were intended as a present to myself. Kara and Paoda had come to return the large nails which she had been using to stretch a sealskin on the surface of the snow.<sup>1</sup>

The door opened, and Mikidi and his son Azak also came in. The pittarak, the north-west wind, was blowing and made its way into the hut, in which I had failed to bring the temperature higher than 48°. Then, suddenly, I felt a draught round my legs: the door must have been left open, and I had no doubt that Timertsit and Ekridi had just made their way in. This was in fact the case, and a small black and white muzzle was laid on my knees.

'It's just like a seal's muzzle when you see him at his breathing hole under the ice,'<sup>2</sup> Mikidi observed.

The angakout have a number of spirits to assist them. Some of these are little men who occupy a district situated

<sup>1</sup> This was an 'ounek', a depilated sealskin which is worked at throughout the long winter months, and finally becomes entirely white.

<sup>2</sup> Seals are mammals, and are consequently compelled to come up to the surface to breathe. A seal prevented from doing this would die of suffocation. When the fjords become frozen over, every seal carefully maintains a number of holes at which he can come up to breathe, and which he hollows out with his fore limbs.

in the middle of the Inlandsis, which is known as Timek. They live on the flesh of wolves or dogs, and have large, prominent stomachs. Whenever they eat a man, they leave the skeleton intact; and the man's flesh, having been rejected later in the form of excrement, returns to the skeleton. Little by little the body then regains its old form, until finally the man comes to life again; whereupon he himself becomes an angakok.

This was a frequent occurrence in former times.

Like the angakout, the Idizitset had the power of creating monstrous beings.

The sorcerer or magician went away in a kayak to some remote and unfrequented region. He hauled his kayak ashore, and having done so, turned his harpoon and his spear with the points facing forward, and his harpoon for birds with the point facing backwards. In the manhole he placed his harpoon float so that it stood erect like a man.

He then went off inland in search of a suitable spot, either a cavern or a fissure in a rock, where he could wedge himself in with his back on one side and his feet on the other. When he had found it he turned over his jacket and covered his head with the hood, or else took off his breeches and put them over his head and down over his eyes.

His next step was to set out a whole miscellany of the queerest possible objects which he had either brought with him or found during the journey; skulls, thongs, bones of men or animals, pieces of skin, etc. Then, swaying his body backwards and forwards, he blew upon all these objects as they lay side by side. Little by little they became welded together, forming a body which gradually took shape as the breath which was to turn it into a living creature fell upon it. The birth of a toupidek was imminent. Then, tentatively, blindly, he covered it with grass, took the monstrous head in his hands and, bending forward, breathed three times down the throat, thus inspiring it



THE KANGERDLUGSSUATSIAG FJORD



with the breath of life. And each time the man did so, horror and dismay struck more deeply into him.

The toupidek then dived into the earth as a seal dives into the ocean, and reappeared in the sea. He turned to his creator, awaiting his orders. Then, and not till then, with mingled pride and fear, the latter uncovered his face and gazed upon the work of his own hands – the means by which he was to wreak vengeance on his enemy, and which – who could tell? – might recoil upon himself and be his own doom.

When the toupidek was unable to carry out the orders of his creator, he turned against him and brought about his death 'by loss of reason'.

'Toukartsi,' Kara told us, 'made a toupidek in order to get rid of her husband. They had just thrown the man in the sea, and the breath was hardly out of his body when the toupidek came back. Almost immediately, the wife lost her reason. So they put her in a little tent for the parinartek, the three days' mourning.<sup>1</sup> Everyone was in the hut, as winter had just come and it was snowing. On the morning of the third day they found her dead: the pittarak had blown away the little tent during the night and she had been frozen to death. And my name is the same as hers,' Kara added, 'and when I was a child I used to think as she did, because her thoughts came out of her and passed through my own mind.'

'And what thoughts did you have that were the same as hers?'

'She wanted to make her husband die. And every time my father or my brother went out hunting I thought they would never come back. I didn't in the least *want* them not to come back. But I did feel as though there was someone else inside me, thinking their own thoughts. And

<sup>1</sup> When a death occurred, the nearest relations of the deceased went into a very strict 'mourning' for three days, followed by a period of less strict mourning; this lasted for about a year. During the three days' mourning they remained crouching at the back of the platform, fully dressed, with their faces to the wall, and their hoods on their heads. They also observed numerous taboos, relating both to work and to diet.

that only stopped when one of my brothers was drowned at sea later on, and I told everyone about these thoughts I had been having.'

'And how did he die?' I asked her.

'He had had trouble with his eyes on account of the sun. He went out hunting all the same with the others, but in a little while his sight got dim. So he went ashore to rest and said he would go back home as soon as he could. But we never saw him again.'

Paoda, by a certain association of ideas, was reminded of the following story which she told us.

'Edita, a daughter of that horrible old woman Kristina (who is Tigayet's mother also), first had two children, twins, who were born dead, and after that two girls who were also born dead. And when her children cried, it was exactly like little puppies crying.

'All the time her daughter was ill, that woman barked and whined persistently. It was just as if a dog was there in the hut, though there wasn't any dog at all. So they understood then that it was because Kristina was an idizitsek.'

'What?' Doumidia cried, looking much alarmed.

'An idizitsek!' Kara exclaimed.

'When was it?' I asked.

'Not more years ago than I have fingers on my hand,' Paoda replied. 'You must know quite well that she was an idizitsek, because when she had a swelling on her hand she told people that she had a spirit that went and fetched anything she wanted from her food store, and that she would get cured that way.'

'What!' There was a general exclamation.

'Yes, she was like Iwak who lived at Ikatek. She was an idizitsek too. She died last winter, and at the moment of her passing, everyone in the hut saw a crow which was calling out to her, "Iwak! Iwak!"'

'A crow?' Doumidia cried out, shuddering.

'A crow?' Kara exclaimed.

'Yes, a crow,' Paoda declared.

'All that is true,' Kristian said to me, observing that I appeared to doubt these statements.

'How is it, then, that no one now ever sees a toupidek, or timertsit, or yaÿwetsiet?'

'Oh, but there are people who still see them and a great many who hear them. The reason is that we are all baptised. The angakout who had been baptised used to appear to the others who had not been baptised, as though they were in the middle of a shining white disc as bright as melted lead, which hid everything that they had seen before. Before we were baptised, it was Diawoudou (the Devil) who made us see all those things. It was the Devil that sent the angakout their spirit-helpers and gave them their power to do all they did.'

'Then the angakout used to know the Devil once?'

'No, they didn't know him; but it was he who gave them their power, and made us believe all those things.'

'And nowadays, when some of you believe you see monsters, how do you explain that?'

'It's the Devil. Just like Yesousi-Kristousi, at Pouidazouitsok.'

'What is that?'

'A territory; it is also called Inourayouwitsok.<sup>1</sup> You know—a place where there is no flowing water, and nothing that grows, and no plants, and no men.'

I had now understood the reference. He was speaking of Jesus in the desert.

Doumidia's left eye was twitching.

'Perhaps the left side of my face is going to drop,' she said. 'Idouna had an eye that twitched and that's what happened to her. If it happens to me, I shall tie on a string to go under my cheek and keep it in place. . . .'

<sup>1</sup> A place where there is no water.

<sup>2</sup> A place where there are no living beings.

*Tuesday, 1st December, 1936.*

8 p.m. It was still night. The temperature outside was 7° below zero; inside the hut, 42°.

The noise and disturbance made by the little puppies under the platform, and the appalling smell of the seal cooked the day before by Tigayet, almost entirely deprived me of sleep. This seal had been unearthed a week earlier by Odarpi after lying beneath stones for no less than two months; and for a week it had been undergoing a process of decomposition under the platform. Now that it was cooked the smell was even worse.

Ippi, the father of Ndartsi of Koudousouk, killed his first wife with a blow of the fist because she made his skin trousers a little too wide.

'He was inclined to be brutal,' Doumidia remarked.



A delightful thing happened to me. I was sitting alone, when Kara came and brought me two shoulder-straps made of sealskin, of the same kind as that which the men still wear occasionally at the present day.

'You see,' she said to me, 'I have sewn an arniwak<sup>1</sup> in the left one. It is a cut stone which was once a pendant of a necklace which I found in a tomb, near Tokroda. There was a child's skull still lying by the side of it. If you wear these shoulder-straps you will be as though you were made of stone.'

'What? Made of stone?'

'Yes. If anyone wanted to harpoon you, the harpoon would have no worse effect on you than it would on a stone. It would simply fall back without hurting you.'

<sup>1</sup> A charm.

It may well have been that Kara did not seriously mean what she said. But it tickled my imagination to suppose that she had at least some small faith in the truth of her statements.

'And you really believe that that is so?'

'Yes, indeed I do,' she replied. 'Wear them, it will be a good thing for you. And in the one for the right arm, I've sewn a piece of a seal's lung.'

'And what is the seal's lung for?'

'If the ice under your sleigh should break, you won't sink: you will be as light as a seal's lung, and you'll float.'

Doumidia told me that the moment I went out of my hut, Timertsit would always begin to whine and search round everywhere. Then she would go outside, and if she did not find me she would come back to see if I had returned meanwhile; and after that she would go out once more and stay there until she could follow me in.

Mikidi and Odarpi had just returned from their sleigh journey up to the high point. They had caught sight of me from a long distance, and yelled at me at the top of their voices to tell me that the ice had arrived at last.

*Wednesday, 2nd December, 1936.*

If a woman about to have a child should dream of sea shells, shrimps, salmon, or angelica, a boy may be expected.

If she dreams of mussels, seaweed, bilberries, or sewing needles, the child will be a girl.

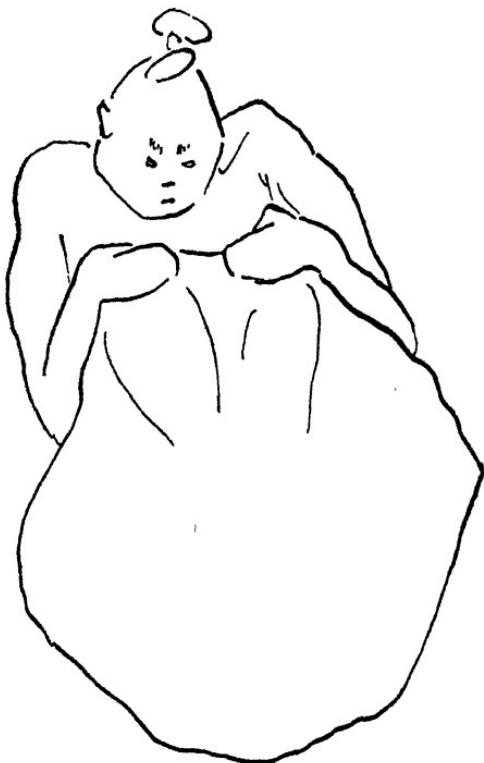
'As the angakout had sufficient power to enable them to visit the country of the dead that lies buried below the earth's surface, or even the moon itself, I don't understand why they did not also pay visits to the kratouna who lived in Iceland. It would have been nearer and less difficult.'

There was a general hesitation amongst my companions. Then, looking rather embarrassed, Kristian replied:

'Yes, but that was probably because they did not know that these kratouna existed.'

It was a poor answer.

I had taken to smoking two or three pipes a day. As long as my supply of tobacco lasted, my companions had been accustomed to smoke every day in my hut, and to take as much tobacco as they wished. For some time past the supply had now been exhausted; and I did not seem to miss it.



Mikidi came to me in the evening, took my box which had long been empty, and without saying a word, put into it a handful of tobacco which he had brought with him.

Kristian sent a message to Doumidia by Tekri that he was making her a present of the skin of the seal that he had

killed to-day, to enable her to make a white skin for her kamiks. The next skin would be for Kara. Kristian had realised that Tigayet never gave them anything, and had therefore decided to give them these presents.

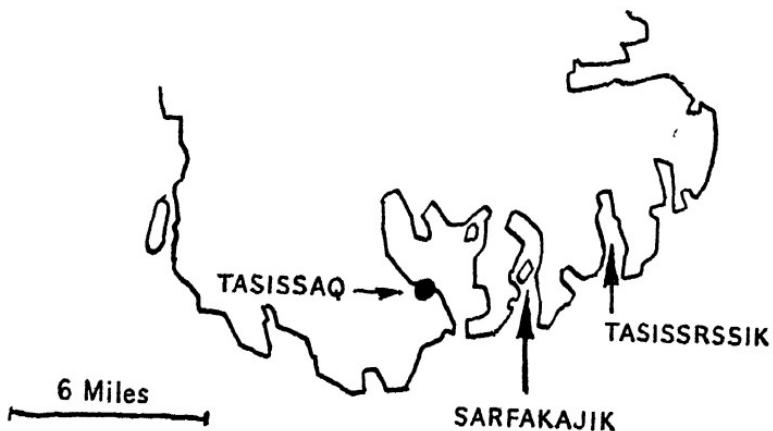
Doumidia was greatly touched, and her joy was a pleasure to see. I too was delighted; it was encouraging indeed to find one's self living with such thoroughly good sorts as some of my companions were.

## CHAPTER VIII

### FROZEN NIGHT

*Thursday, 3rd December, 1936.*

The ice was now spreading over the entire surface of the fjord – beautiful ice with even surface, which slowly but continuously made its way forward against the wind, which in its turn stirred up the tiny wavelets that broke in spindrift against the edge of the ice and thus collaborated in its formation.

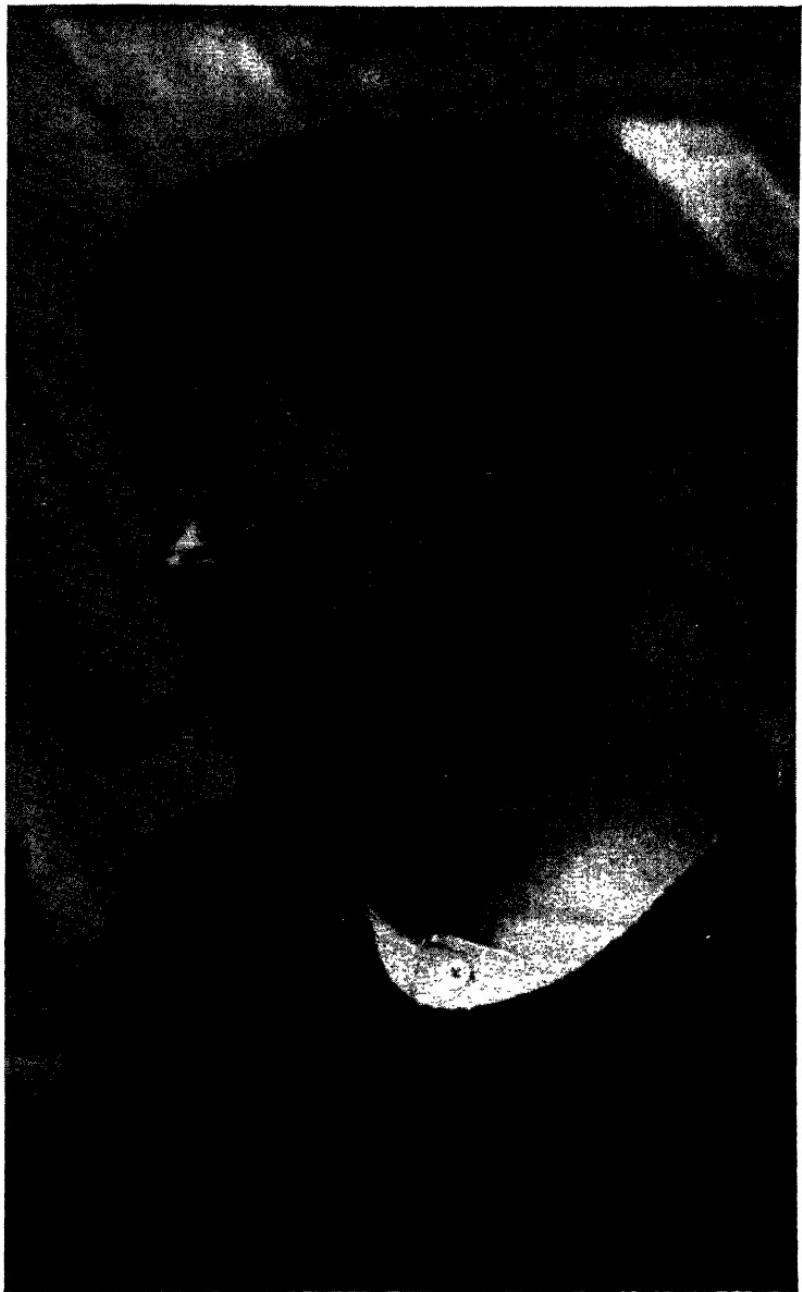


Kara told us a story:

'Papik was a young hunter, who excelled at hunting, dancing, and singing. He coveted Poutouak's wife. Poutouak was at the festival at Tasissarssik,<sup>1</sup> whilst Papik accompanied his parents to Sarfakajik.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The little bay like a lake.

<sup>2</sup> The dangerous current.



KRISTIAN

(His Eskimo name was "Tougartougou"—he who stirs in his sleep)



'One day Papik asked his brother to lend him his kayak. The brother asked him the reason.

"I am going to fetch Poutouak's wife and take her as my own."

'He departed in the kayak, towing another one behind him. On his arrival at Tasissarssik, he hauled the two kayaks ashore and went up to Poutouak's tent. Poutouak and his wife saw him coming, and he entered the tent without giving Poutouak a glance. Then he said to Poutouak's wife:

"I have come to fetch you. Come with me."

Poutouak's wife turned to her husband; but he was afraid of Papik, and did not open his mouth. Then Poutouak's wife rose and went out of the tent, and Papik followed her. They went down to the shore together; Papik launched the two kayaks, helped the woman to enter one of them, and got into the other himself; and so they departed.'

I made some notes on the various 'tribes' existing in the district.<sup>2</sup>

In the strict sense of the term, such divisions cannot be traced. The inhabitants of Sermilik, however, constitute a united body with similar characteristics. They are the best people in the whole district, those who most resemble the Eskimo of the pre-colonisation period, and who, less than any of the others, seek to take advantage of white men. It is they who are the least often to be seen at the trading centre.

Amongst all the Sermilik groups, there is a group, formed by the inhabitants of Isortoq, which stands apart. These people are the descendants of members of an ancient Southern grouping. Their language is slightly different, with marked inflexions of the voice, and has a tendency to resemble that of the West coast. They are liars, thieves,

<sup>1</sup> Marriage ceremonies had the same stark simplicity. The man went to fetch the woman he wanted to marry and took her back to his tent or hut. Sometimes the woman made some show of resistance.

<sup>2</sup> See map at the end of the volume.

gossips, and scandal-mongers: Christianity has had but little influence on them. Many of them are sorcerers, and not a day passes without their seeing some strange monster or other. A child may go out for a few minutes. When he comes in you may hear him say, 'I have seen something frightful.'

Their weeping is extraordinarily beautiful to hear.

'It's just like the rising and falling of waves in the sea,' Doumidia told me. 'Last autumn, when so many people died, Miguerti was crying. The sound was so lovely that I went to listen; first of all it became louder and louder, and then gradually grew soft again; it sounded as though it were a long way off, and then it came nearer and nearer again and louder and louder. Then it went farther away again. It was quite beautiful, just like the wind and the sea.'

Another group is that of Kulusuk. They are poor hunters, and are accustomed to get all they can out of the white men. It is the artistic centre of the district. They make masks and toupidek; and they are excellent dancers.

The formation of the Kungmiut group was due to the influence of Yohanna and her husband Karadi.<sup>1</sup> These people are fishermen as well as hunters on land, Karadi having taught them the art.

Sermiligaq is the home of a large family group, the descendants of the angakok Maratsi. They are business men and much given to gossip.

Last year, when I paid my first visit to Sermiligaq, I went there in Nada's sleigh. Notwithstanding the frightful leanness and the slow pace of his four dogs, he had insisted on taking me there himself. During the course of our journey Nada placed his hand on my leg and said to me, in the jargon he reserved for Kratouna:

<sup>1</sup> The Danes call him Karl Andreasen. He and his wife were extremely intelligent people, of considerable refinement, and rapidly became the two most important Eskimo on the East coast. The Danish explorer, Knud Rasmussen, invited them to stay at Copenhagen in the years 1933-1934. Karadi died there of pneumonia.

'You're the leading man among the French, aren't you?'

'Yes, why?'

'Because I'm the same at Sermiligaq.'

Angmadidik, the mother of the angakok Maratsi, after being the wife of a boy of the same age as her son, twenty years younger than herself, became the third wife of the angakok Akkou, one of whose wives was her own daughter. The latter, outraged at having her own mother to share her platform, threw herself in the sea on the day after the marriage.

During the winter of 1885, Akkou and all his family started on a sleigh journey to visit Holm,<sup>1</sup> who had just discovered the Eskimo of Angmagssalik. Half-way between Sermiligaq and Kungmiut, Angmadidik became exhausted. She dragged herself along by the side of the sleighs, and Akkou, her husband, refused to take her on his as it would slow down the pace. She then sat down in the snow saying that she could go no further; and they left her behind.

On the following day she was discovered by a sleigh from Kungmiut, with both feet frozen and unable to move. She was brought back in the sleigh to Kungmiut, where she spent several months until her son Maratsi went to fetch her away. He pushed his sleigh into the hut, tied his old mother on it, and brought her back to Sermiligaq.

All the oumiaks from Sermiligaq were starting off on an expedition to gather bilberries. In one of them Angmadidik was seated, with both her legs paralysed.

But she also took part in the gathering, dragging herself along by her hands in a series of small leaps, and wearing round her neck a bag in which she placed the little black berries she gathered. For two winters past, her legs had been useless to her. Twice had summer warmth returned and still her feet were frozen; and with that warmth her

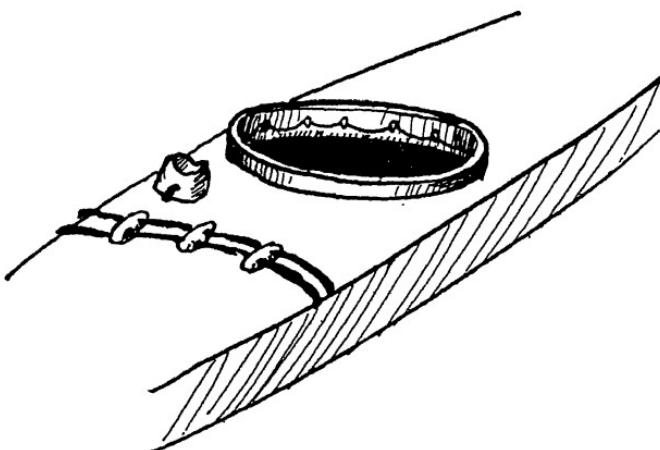
<sup>1</sup> Gustav Holm, a Danish naval lieutenant, who discovered the Eskimo of Angmagssalik in 1885, and spent the winter of 1885-6 in that district.

legs began to melt; the flesh from her thighs fell away as though decayed.

And the time came when Angmadidik could no longer drag herself along by her hands. For as she moved, a trail of fragments would be left behind. . . .

Summer has returned. All the oumiaks from Sermiligaaq have left for Kungmiut, for the caplin fishing.

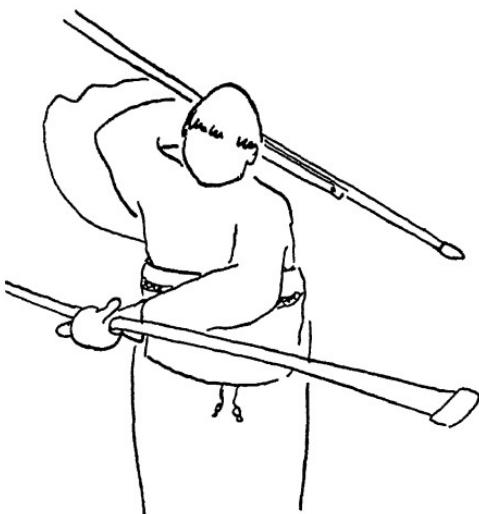
All the oumiaks have departed. But Angmadidik is no longer to be seen. Maratsi has made her a little tent, a place of refuge rather, a sanctuary, in which she hopes to die.



And as the oumiaks draw farther and farther away into the distance, Angmadidik remains, abandoned, solitary, with neither food nor water near her. Stretched out on the ground she waits, patiently, hopefully, for death to take her.

At the time when Angmadidik's husband was the boy twenty years younger than herself, she used frequently to sleep with other men, and took no interest whatever in her oil lamps, that is to say, in her household duties generally. Her husband, disgusted by her negligence, used frequently to strike her.

Maratsi decided to kill his young father-in-law who treated his mother so cruelly. One day he started off with him in kayaks, his cousin Sanimouinak accompanying them. Maratsi and Sanimouinak each paddled more slowly in order to keep behind. Maratsi seized his harpoon and threw it, aiming at his father-in-law's back; but the harpoon fell short; it stuck fast in and penetrated the wood-work behind the man-hole,<sup>1</sup> and consequently behind the

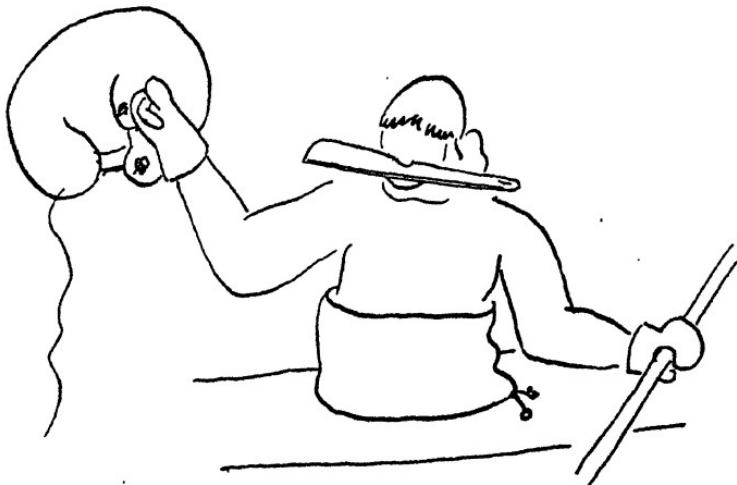


man whom he was seeking to kill. It was then, and not till then, that the doomed man turned round and grasped the situation. Immediately he started paddling as hard as he could—so hard that he soon drew far ahead, trailing Maratsi's float behind him. He drew this up to him, looking like a narwhal which has been harpooned. Then Maratsi and his companion began also to paddle fast and vigorously. Maratsi's pace was slower than Sanimouinak's, and the latter soon began to draw near his prey. He gave a final and violent stroke of the paddle, took it in his left hand, and seized and raised his harpoon with the right. But during this time the other man had drawn farther

<sup>1</sup> A man takes up his position in a kayak by placing his legs through a circular hole with a wooden rim.

away and the distance was too great. Sanimouinak laid down his harpoon and began once more to paddle at great speed until again he drew near to the other man. For the second time he took up his harpoon, raised and threw it; and the weapon embedded itself between the man's two shoulders. He fell forward in his kayak, which thereupon overturned.

As soon as the man's struggles had ceased, Sanimouinak



and Maratsi approached his kayak and drew him up to the surface of the water. With the aid of a knife they extracted the point of the harpoon which had been driven into his back; but they failed in their efforts to draw out the point of the other harpoon which was firmly fixed in the wood of the kayak, and were obliged to sever the thong.

From that day onwards, whenever Sanimouinak harpooned a seal he forgot to throw his float into the water, and thus ran the risk of capsizing.<sup>1</sup> And he realised that

<sup>1</sup> The point of the harpoon is bound by a long sealskin thong to a float made from the skin of an entire seal. This float is made fast to the top of the kayak by means of pegs. Immediately a seal is harpooned, the float must be thrown into the water. If this is not done, the seal, in his efforts to escape, will overturn the kayak and draw it along with him.

this was the form that the vengeance of his victim had taken.

Then, little by little, Sanimouinak grew to hate Maratsi, because if Maratsi had not been so clumsy the dead man would never have had occasion to take his vengeance on him; and he swore that he would kill Maratsi at the first opportunity that occurred. But he never killed him; and the reason for this was that one day he forgot once more to throw his float in the sea, and the seal, as it fled through the water, overturned his kayak and he was drowned.

It was Mahré who witnessed Sanimouinak's death.

*Friday, 4th December, 1936.*

For the first time this year, we were able to-day to go hunting on the surface of ice. We departed this morning at about half-past nine, before daybreak, with our kayaks on sleighs which we ourselves pushed. During the first hour I was somewhat baffled by all this fresh, newly-formed ice to which I had by then grown unaccustomed, and felt ill at ease on the sea of white on which I slid at every step. But old experience soon came to my rescue.

In the earlier stages we used the sleigh for crossing arms of the sea which were not yet frozen over. Then, when these inlets became too wide, we embarked in our kayaks and drew the sleighs across to us on reaching the other side. In all these operations such concentrated attention was required that I almost failed to notice the alpen-glühn on the other side of the fjord. Still, I managed to indulge in a small flight of imagination, and tried to picture to myself what the appearance of the fjord would be when it was completely covered by ice.

I narrowly escaped an involuntary bath as I climbed on to a small iceberg to discover the best line to take in order to reach the shore. The edge of the newly-formed ice gave way under my feet, and I only just succeeded in grasping the nearest support that lay at hand; but with my woollen gloves, my hold was very insecure, and I felt my fingers

slipping. By a violent effort I managed to regain a position on the ice. On the spot where I had placed my feet there was nothing to be seen but a dark hole. In order to get down again, I had to wait until the swell, which was lifting the whole field of ice in long, rolling undulations, should bring my small berg in contact with a more solid formation: and I had a period of anxious watching, right at the edge of the newly-formed ice and about twenty yards from the open sea, whilst I was being swayed from side to side by the swell as though I were in a canoe.

*Saturday, 5th December, 1936.*

*5 o'clock in the morning.* I woke up. Tekri's little oil lamp was burning and he was preparing to write. For a month past he had been occupied the whole day in recording miscellaneous events in our establishment, and all the tales of ancient tradition which Kristian had spent each evening in relating to him at great length. This would supply me with a regular fund of information at the end of the year.<sup>1</sup>

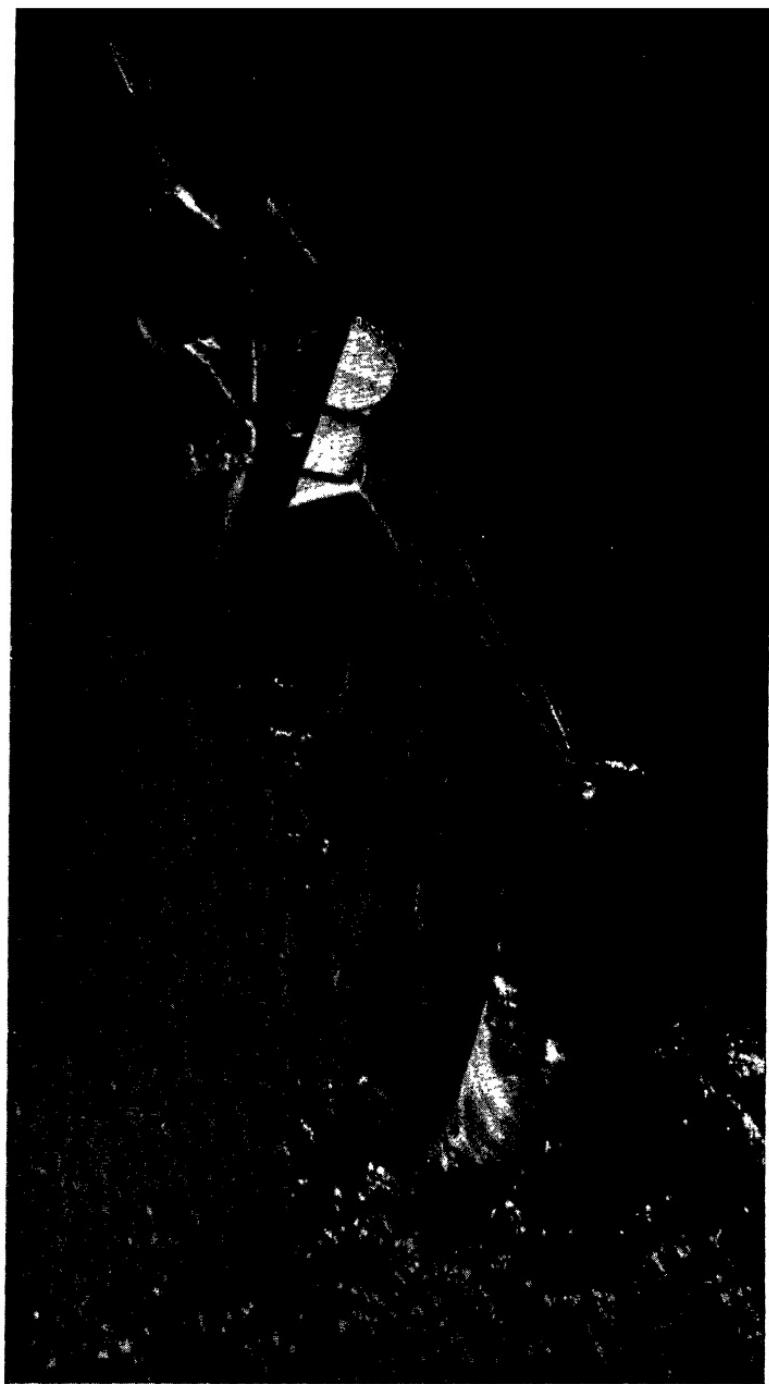
I had returned from hunting, when Kara said to me:  
'Give me your pipe.'

It was hanging from a nail fixed in the wall, and I took it down and handed it to her. A little tobacco and some ash still remained. It would make a splendid quid for her.

She handed the pipe back to me with a word of thanks. She had filled it for me with tobacco which consisted of numerous cigarette-ends which she had collected during the autumn for this very purpose.

In the neighbourhood of Ikateq there is a cliff inhabited by the kringaranguitsit, monsters which have neither nose nor ears. A few years ago an uncle of Kristian's was re-

<sup>1</sup> During my first expedition (1934-5) I arranged for five or six Eskimo, men and women, to write down all the tales, legends, or miscellaneous news which they knew or heard of. At the present time (January 1938) they are still continuing to supply me with this information, which is sent to me every year. They write in their own language (knowing no other) and I have no difficulty in translating it.



KRISTIAN BRINGS BACK A LARGE SEAL.



turning from a hunting expedition. Everyone saw him approach and go behind the cliff. He was never seen again. A search was made for him everywhere, but without success: and it was realised that he had been kidnapped by the kringuaranguitsit.

In order to rescue a man who disappears in this manner the intervention of the angakout, within a period of three days after the disappearance, becomes necessary. During the course of a tornidek séance<sup>1</sup> which was held the same evening, Kristian's grandfather saw clearly that the man was with the kringaranguitsit in the cliff. But he had been frightened and had lacked the courage to declare himself.

On the following day Younta's father, who also was an angakok, made a further attempt during a tornidek séance. But he was equally unsuccessful and disappointed everybody. He had a large wound on the little finger of the left hand, which he had given himself on the previous day with his knife whilst he was eating.

'If he had not had this wound he would have brought my uncle back,' was Kristian's conclusion.

Another uncle of Kristian's died in a strange manner.

He went out hunting one morning on the ice with a few companions. Suddenly, he heard a kind of whistling sound which pursued him on his way. A tornatek, an angakok's spirit helper, was following him under the ice.

His doom was sealed. Shortly afterwards, the ice gave way beneath his feet and he disappeared. A few weeks later his father died of grief at the loss of his two sons, and on the following day his mother threw herself into the sea.

\* When the great epidemic of the previous winter broke

<sup>1</sup> A séance of witchcraft. The angakok sits on a sealskin, in the hut, opposite the entrance to the passageway. His hands are bound behind his back; and his head is bound to his knees by means of a thong drawn round the neck and under the knees. All lights are then extinguished, and after a certain number of other very long and very complicated preparations the angakok is rendered capable of summoning spirit helpers or monsters, and becomes able to pay visits to those who live underground, in the rocks, in the sea, or in the Inlandsis, or to visit the moon or the Kingdom of the dead.

out at Isortoq, Binnti emptied his ammunition-pouch, discharging bullets into every corner of his hut, under the platform, through the entrance passage, and through the windows. At the same time Addou went round the interior of the hut, firing in every direction.

'But that didn't prevent them dying. They never did as God wanted them,' was Doumidia's comment.

*Sunday, 6th December, 1936.*

We went out after seal, keeping a look-out for them at the edge of the ice.

To-day was Paoda's birthday.<sup>1</sup>

Mikidi was busily engaged in making all sorts of preparations in my hut, wrapping up in newspaper all the stockings, pullovers, and towels which I had given him for this occasion, together with some magnificent green earrings which he himself had bought in the summer at the trading centre.

'I dare say she'll be pleased,' he said.

There is a legend concerning the Kratouna.<sup>2</sup>

There were two families of Kratouna at Kungmiut, and an Eskimo family which lived not far away. The Eskimo man coveted the wife of one of the Kratouna. From sheer jealousy he set fire to the brushwood which grew all over Kungmiut, and the Kratouna were compelled to abandon the place in great haste.

*Monday, 7th December, 1936.*

6.45 a.m. I woke up. Outside it was still night, and the whole hut was wrapped in gloom; but as there was a glimmer of moonlight, the layer of fresh snow that had fallen

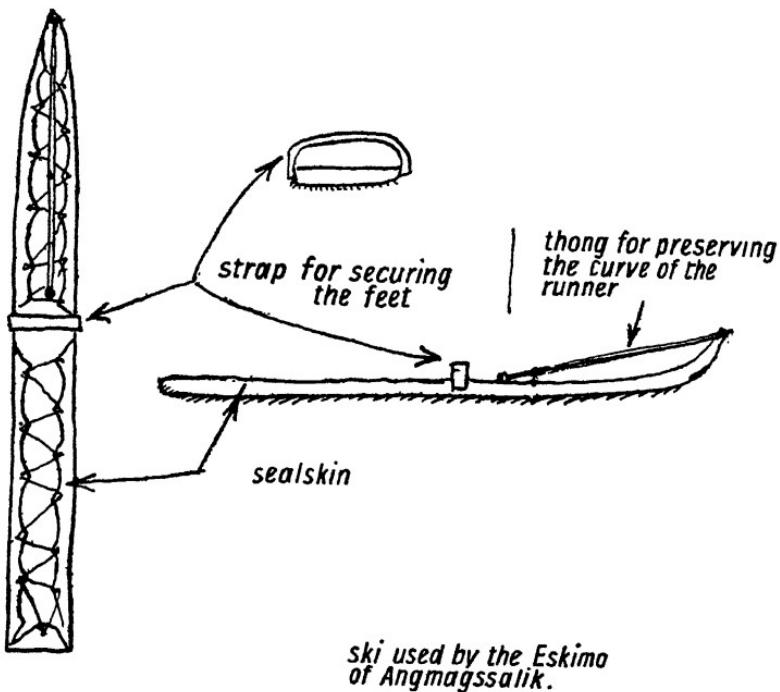
<sup>1</sup> The majority of the Eskimo are unable to tell their own age. The only dates of births that are known are those which have been inscribed in the Danish registers; and these not often.

<sup>2</sup> The white men, the Kratouna, were represented in legend as a fierce and savage race which would come one day from all parts of the world and annihilate the entire Eskimo population.

could be seen, a white streak, along the window. I sat on my platform and looked out of the windows. On my sleigh a foot of snow had fallen during the night.

The weather is splendid. Not a cloud to be seen.

All is peace and calm. The dogs, except Ekridi and Timertsit who are playing together, are curled up asleep.

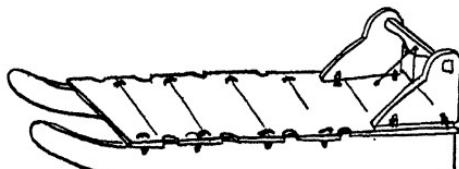


Kristian put on his leather trousers, and Mikidi his white jacket. 'Get dressed,' they said to me. Though I was the first up, I had not yet washed and had had nothing to eat. I had barely had time to put the water to heat on the stove.

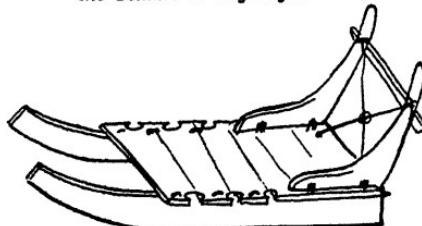
I retired to my hutch, put out the fire, slipped on my jacket and leather trousers, took my gloves, my knife, my harness and traces, turned out the hurricane lamp and dashed outside. I had also to drag my gun in its case along

with me, and thus heavily encumbered I made my way into the hut.

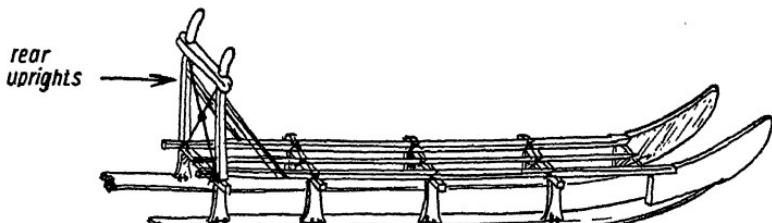
'Leave your gun,' Mikidi said to me. 'Not worth taking it.'



*pattern of sleigh in use amongst  
the Eskimo of Angmagssalik*



*pattern as above, but showing  
the influence of the West coast  
of Greenland*



*pattern of sleigh used by the author*

'And what about you? Aren't you taking your guns?'

'No,' Mikidi answered.

'I am taking mine,' Odarpi said.

'And I my revolver.'

A long time had passed since Kristian started, and then we ourselves were hot foot on his trail. Kristian had five dogs, and Mikidi four, two of which were mine. I had six

on a single trace. Odarpi had gone off on skis,<sup>1</sup> his rifle over his shoulder.

My dogs were making good progress, and I was satisfied with the formation they were keeping in this newly fallen, deep snow. All was going well; my sleigh was not sinking in, thanks to its skis. Mikidi followed behind me, as he got on better in my tracks.

Then I went astray on a wrong track of Kristian's which brought me to the edge of a cliff. Kristian had made a half-turn at that point, and his tracks appeared lower down at the edge of the sea.

'Turn right.'

Mikidi had heard me and took the path on the right; and my dogs immediately dashed after him. He had only four dogs, and now that I was behind him he had only two, for my own two were dragging in the opposite direction, trying to get back to me. Seeing the trouble he was in, I shouted to him and asked him whether I should get on ahead.

The path continued in a series of switchbacks. Away below, the ice on the fjord, broken up by the heavy swell of the previous night, was cracked and dented in black mosaic patterns. The trail followed downwards, and my dogs started off at a gallop and rushed down the slope, nose uplifted, ears back. All of a sudden they hurled themselves in a body to the left, deserted the trail, and tried to climb a little hillock, with their ears cocked, and buried in snow up to their necks.

I was puzzled to know what could be happening. Was there a raven? Or could it be a bear? Standing with my back against the uprights to keep the sleigh steady, I searched the horizon which appeared over the knoll, but could see nothing.

It was just a whim they had had.

<sup>1</sup> The Eskimo of Angmagssalik saw skis for the first time in 1906, and quickly realised their utility. The skis which they make themselves are in white wood, short, and covered all over with sealskin. A strap, also of sealskin, secures the feet, which are clad in kamiks (sealskin boots.)

Cracks of the whip to the left, and I got my sleigh back on to the trail, which my dogs immediately followed at a gallop. A little farther on, thinking that there might after all be some cause for their strange behaviour, I stopped them. I wanted to wait for Mikidi to tell him what had happened. It might be worth while going to see. But there was no sign of Mikidi, who a short time ago had not been far away from me. I could not imagine what he was doing.

Then, suddenly, I heard him shouting: but I failed to understand, though he was yelling at the top of his voice – so loudly that he was quite hoarse.

'What is it?'

'Naninguouugayik! A jolly little bear!' he yelled.

Now I really had understood. My dogs were good dogs, and I was a ninny.

The bear's skin belongs to the man who sees him first.

I turned the sleigh clean over. I thrust the uprights deep into the snow to prevent the dogs from moving off, yelling as Mikidi did, and plunging into snow up to my waist. I climbed on to the hillock, and there I saw Mikidi reeling about in the snow like myself, using his outstretched arms like a balancing pole, and scarlet in the face; and far away in the distance, his sleigh with no dog attached to it except Kradibasok, barking.

On the farther side of the little valley there was a splendid bear, moving along quite undisturbed, and followed by the three dogs which Mikidi had just set loose. We floundered towards each other, and I handed the revolver to him, whereupon he said breathlessly, tapping his head:

'Fool that I was, not to have brought my rifle.'

'Don't worry, here is my revolver. It's loaded.'

'You don't want it?'

'Take it, it was you who saw the bear. Would you like me to take off one of my dogs?'

'Yes, indeed I would.'

Then we began each of us to utter long, shrill cries to attract the attention of Kristian and Odarpi, and also of the people in the hut. Perhaps Gâba and Yosepi would bring us our rifles. . . .

Mikidi then went off again, stirring up the snow from his hips downwards, panting, sweating, red in the face, on the track of the bear, which was calmly making its escape and going up towards the mountain behind which lay the sea.

I returned to my sleigh. From the hole in which it lay there was nothing to be seen. I let Kiviok loose, and he was off like a bullet; and then Tioralak and Kranorsouak. I abandoned the sleigh in its hole, and Meldorf, Aderangui and Waps with it. I had barely had time to turn round when I heard Kristian coming up to me from below. I dashed back to get my whip, for I knew his dogs only too well. Anguinek had died from their bites, and Arnatak had narrowly escaped a similar fate.

I arrived at the exact moment when the foremost of Kristian's dogs appeared behind the rock in front of which my sleigh was resting; but my own and Kristian's joint efforts failed to prevent a fierce and furious scrimmage. Amidst the confusion and medley of sleighs and traces, the howling and barking of dogs and our own shouts and cries, Kristian asked me:

'Who saw the bear?'

'Mikidi.'

I was bitten on the rump by the white bitch, Kristian having a piece of the sleeve of his jacket taken out by one of his own dogs. After endless trouble we managed at last to unravel the mess, and Kristian continued his journey followed by three dogs, my sleigh, and myself.

Near the top of the hillock, my dogs were making desperate efforts to drag up the sleigh, which was almost vertical. Dripping with perspiration, I yelled at them with all the strength I possessed, pushing hard with my left

hand, whilst with my right I cracked my whip to urge them on.

The sleigh was blocked.

Then, somehow or other, as best I could, I hoisted myself almost to the level of the dogs, who were clinging on desperately with all four legs in their efforts to avoid sliding backwards. But as might happen in a dream, I loosened my grip and slid gently back into my hole, grabbing at the sleigh which I dragged down with me. Then, reascending the hillock in a slanting direction, I arrived at last, covered with snow, above my dogs, who gazed at me rather mournfully.

And all this time the bear was calmly making his escape.

Down in the middle of the valley there was Mikidi's sleigh, with Kradibasok still barking. Kristian's sleigh was there also, with two dogs. His little white bitch was climbing up towards the bear, which was already far away up on the mountain; whilst on an open, level space his other two dogs were chasing Kranorsouak, followed by Kristian himself, who was now floundering about in the snow, yelling at the top of his voice and brandishing his whip without the slightest result.

High up above the bear was making off, occasionally turning round in an attempt to cut to pieces, with a blow of his paw, one of the dogs which was getting in his way.

And so the hunt continued – the hunt, I mean, provided by Kranorsouak for the two dogs. They zigzagged between the sleighs, overtaking each other, at which moment they became hidden from view. Then Kranorsouak would reappear, covered with snow, fly off once more, and be again overtaken a little farther on. In the meantime, as far as was practicable in all that snow, Kristian and I continued running; we passed each other again and again, our voices gone, red in the face and dripping with perspiration.

And whilst this mad ballet was still in progress, Odarpi appeared, advancing slowly on his skis, with his long stick in his hand and his rifle slung across his back. However,

he entirely failed to see us, having no eyes except for the bear.

'Get up higher, higher!' he was yelling out to Mikidi.

By this time the bear was no longer to be seen. Odarpi had also vanished. And shortly afterwards the three dogs also disappeared, the black one followed by the two white, in a cloud of powdery snow. I was thinking to myself, 'he's done for, it's all up with him. He was my best dog.' Kristian and I dashed forward in their tracks; but without a word uttered, for we were worn out.

The path descended, mounted again, descended once more, crossed the track of the sleighs, was lost in a ravine, doubled back, went down in the direction of the sea, ascended again towards the mountain.

'There they are, both of them!'

That was Kristian's voice, high up above us. If both dogs were there, I must abandon all hope: either they had caught up with Kranorsouak, or they had left him dead. I retraced my footsteps, perspiration trickling down my back, and feeling as though my chest were on fire; there was snow on my face, burning my temples. My sleigh was there with the three dogs, who were curled up asleep, with Kiviok and Tioralak playing round them in circles. I harnessed my three dogs once more, and Kiviok licked my face. On the other side of the valley Kristian could be seen starting off again at full speed with his five dogs; whilst Mikidi was there in the middle of the valley with Kradibasok, who was still giving tongue.

And so the chase went on - by which I mean that I started off once more in search of Kranorsouak, going upwards again slowly along the track and then redescending it, and calling out to the dog in my most persuasive tones. Finally, I stood upright on a rock almost at the edge of the ice and cried aloud to him. Had he gone off to die in some remote corner? Or could he have returned to the hut?

'Kra.'

I had barely given my dogs their signal to start, when they were off at full gallop. My intention was to make for the valley of the lakes, where the bear should be – if indeed he were still there – and I thought sadly of Kranorsouak, who might at that moment be dying in some unknown spot.

Suddenly my dogs pricked up their ears and turned their heads in my direction as though something behind them had attracted their attention.

'This time I won't use my glasses,' I said to myself. I turned round; but what I saw behind the sleigh was not a bear.

It was Kranorsouak, with his tail between his legs.

At the second lake I overtook Doumidia and Tigayet, decked out in sealskin trousers. They had heard rifle shots and had just left the hut.

'Is the bear dead?'

'We don't know.'

'There is talking going on away back there.' Behind the hillock where I had rejoined them I did in fact hear voices.

'Hurry up,' they said to me, going on ahead; and I could see nothing but their large behinds waddling along above my dogs.

On the farther side of the hillock I met Gâba and Yosepi with their rifles slung across their backs, returning to the hut.

'He's over there, quite near. We killed him a little higher up.'

'Hurry up, hurry up. There's still a portion to be had.'<sup>1</sup>

No sooner had the two women given me this advice than they darted forward along the track, with Doumidia leading. But so far as I was concerned, I merely held my dogs in check. I didn't care whether I got the fifth portion or not, and I knew that Doumidia would like it.

<sup>1</sup> Certain large seals, bears, narwhals, and all large animals in general are shared in five portions between the hunters who have taken part in the hunt or those who have been present at it. The parts are distributed in the order in which the hunters (or the others) have hit the animal (whether with bullets or any other missile, such as a stone).

There, on the side of the hill, were Kristian, Odarpi, and Mikidi, and behind the sleigh - the bear. Finis.

11.30 p.m. All the oil lamps are lit, and every occupant of the hut has a large bowl full of meat before him. The temperature is 80°, and everyone is stripped.

*Tuesday, 8th December, 1936.*

Departure at daybreak, that is to say, about 9.30 a.m.

The ice was covered with a layer of soft, melted snow which gave it a uniformly grey appearance over the whole of its surface. I glanced upwards to look at a raven, when suddenly my feet felt as though they were resting on butter, and I found myself leaning with both elbows on ice, standing in water. Getting out of it was an easy matter. I was not even wet, for I had adjusted my clothes very carefully that morning.

We hunted from cover. I spent a long time listening to the music of the fjord; the water, the wind, and the ice.

*Wednesday, 9th December, 1936.*

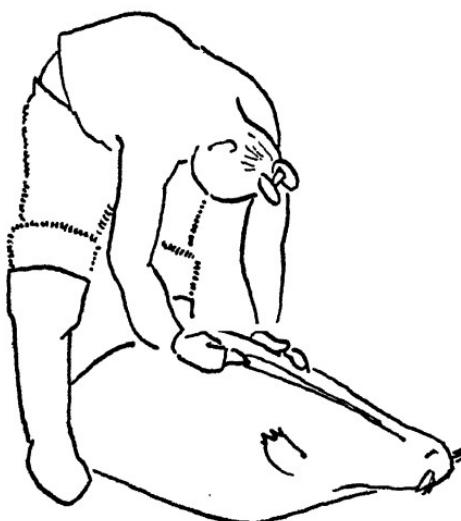
The bear's tongue is eaten exclusively by the women, the head by the men. Kriwi came to fetch me to eat my portion of the head.

On the window platform a basin had been placed from which the bear's head overflowed. In that basin there was complete and utter obscurity: it was quite impossible to see anything. Seated around it we, the men of the establishment, carved slices of meat for ourselves. I took my hunting knife and joined in the carving; but I was in a blue funk lest I cut off a slice of my own hand or lose a finger.

Mikidi brought back a huge seal, which filled half the floor of the hut. Light fell upon it from the oil lamps made from empty meat tins, but was partially obscured by vapour which arose from the still warm meat. There was blood from the meat in all the bowls and other receptacles which hung above the lamps.

Paoda was cutting, breaking, severing, pulling, pushing, stirring, sucking, seizing, disembowelling. Finally, she extracted an embryo the size of a forearm, black, with white moustaches, and dripping.

I had given some tapioca soup tablets to Mikidi, who was very fond of them. Little Kerti, his son, gazed at them. They looked so pretty in their red and yellow cases.



Suddenly he began to cry.  
"Why are you crying?" his mother asked him.  
"'Cos it smells simply horrible,' the child answered, crying still more loudly.

*Thursday, 10th December, 1936.*

Kranorsouak was ill. He refused even fresh meat, and ate snow continuously. I had put him at the entrance to my hut to prevent his drinking, and he vomited over the door.

I was yarning to my three companions, telling them of a method of escaping from a lion which consists of throwing one's self on the ground and pretending to be dead.

They told me that in the case of a bear, one has 'to show one's teeth and snarl at him'. A stick is used for this purpose. You have to stand up, facing the bear and brandishing the stick in his direction. The bear, confronted by this strange enemy who seems to have no fear of him, stops dead, turns round, and usually takes to his heels. What is chiefly important is to avoid giving him any impression that you are afraid of him. In other words - bluff!

I was told that there are bears so big that a man can sit down in their tracks. Their pads are bluish in colour. They are so huge that they pay no attention whatever to dogs pursuing them; and their hide is so hard and thick as to be impervious to a bullet from a rifle.

Often they have a raven on their backs which eats the flesh of their loins; and this raven is the same for them as a louse is for a man.

Ordinary bears have a trail which, as regards the position of the imprint, resembles that of dogs. The tracks of these other bears, however, are like those of foxes.

*Friday, 11th December, 1936.*

Abdication of Edward VIII.

Accession of George VI.

Disappearance of Jean Mermoz  
in the Southern Seas.

Death of Louis Delaprée in  
Spain.

(Press extracts added in December 1937)

Kranorsouak died to-day. He was in my hut during the whole of the afternoon, in the throes of death. I tried every possible means, including artificial respiration, of saving him.

I was horribly depressed, and could do nothing the whole day. I felt as though I had lost my best friend.

*Sunday, 13th December, 1936.*

Kristian went off alone on skis, and did not return until three o'clock in the afternoon, when it was pitch dark, having killed a she-bear and two cubs, at Ikasakajik. These would be brought back on the following day.

I spent the whole day thinking about Kranorsouak.

What a joy it is that I am in such complete sympathy with my companions. If they still thought of me as they would of an ordinary white man; if I were a solitary figure surrounded by people who felt only hostility towards me — well, it would be unbearable.

*Monday, 14th December, 1936.*

We started off and crossed the fjord on the surface of the ice to go and fetch Kristian's bears. But without Kranorsouak, and oh, the difference! My dogs were all at sea, were difficult to move, and needed the whip to restore them to reason. It looked as though I might be compelled to return to the 'fan' formation.

Kranorsouak was laid out under the window platform to thaw, as Kara wanted to skin him. Each time I entered the hut it needed an effort on my part to sit on the platform.

*Tuesday, 15th December, 1936.*

Kranorsouak's death was not due, as I had supposed, to perforation of the stomach, but was the result of wounds which he had received the other day when we were hunting Mikidi's bear, and he had fought Kristian's two dogs.

Kara removed the skin to-day: his stomach was intact, but there were holes in the flesh below it, and traces of bites between the legs. The intestines were blue.

I dreamed of him last night. I saw him coming to me, as he had always been accustomed to do, to rub his head between my knees. I was overcome with astonishment at

finding him still alive; and I asked Kara what had happened.

'When he was thawed he came to life again,' was her reply.

I went into the hut. There was bear's flesh everywhere. In my large basin, the bear's head with the spine still attached to it was lying in a pool of blood. The head, which was resting on the rim of the basin, seemed to be looking at me; the eyes were still in their sockets. On the floor, one of the little bear-cubs, hardly bigger than a dog, lay on its back in readiness for Paoda to cut it up. The head was still intact, but the stomach was open and the intestines were spreading over the flagstones. The other cub had been laid on the window platform for the flesh to melt. Every bowl and basin was full to overflowing with fresh meat, and all the empty meat tins were filled with blood.

Also lying on the floor, on a skin coated with its fat, was a disembowelled seal. I stepped over all these piles of flesh, into pools of blood, and went and sat on the platform; and there I had a shock which made me start up from my seat. Lying stretched out beside me on the platform was Kra-norsouak. I thought he was underneath.

Three weeks earlier Doumidia had been complaining that she had nothing to wear on her head, and I gave her a white beret on the same day, which she wore throughout the day; but on the following one Odarpi took it when he went out hunting. Two days later she had knitted another for herself.

Yesterday evening, beneath the window platform where the little puppies slept, played, and made all their messes, Tipou found some black object.

'What is that?' she said, drawing it out from beneath two fingers.

'That belongs to me,' Doumidia said.

It was a beret with a pompon, a beret made of white wool, in perfect condition with not a hole in it anywhere, but horribly dirty.

'I thought you had no beret,' I said.

'Oh, yes, but that's last year's,' she replied, testily.

*Thursday, 17th December, 1936.*

Michel Legris said to me before my departure in 1934: 'I should like to go with you for the sake of the beautifully sinister aspect of the whole business.' I am inclined to think that, had he had my experiences, Legris would not have found that aspect wanting.

*Saturday, 19th December, 1936.*

I had paid out my shark line,<sup>1</sup> and given the usual three pulls at it to get it into position. I was then free to take the sleigh out for a run, whilst hoping that I might find my rope in a shark's stomach on the following day.

Arnatak had been off the chain for about a month. She was still thin, but instead of moving about in the snow with her head down and her tail between her legs, she was now in a playful, happy mood and very affectionate towards myself. Her character had improved in every way. She even tried to play with Ekridi and Timertsit, who were always astonished by these advances.

Large tree-trunks, stripped of all their branches, are sometimes found by the Eskimo in the middle of the ice-pack, floating in a space clear of ice. These have been brought by the polar current from Siberia.

I asked Kristian if he knew where that country was. He told me he had read about it.

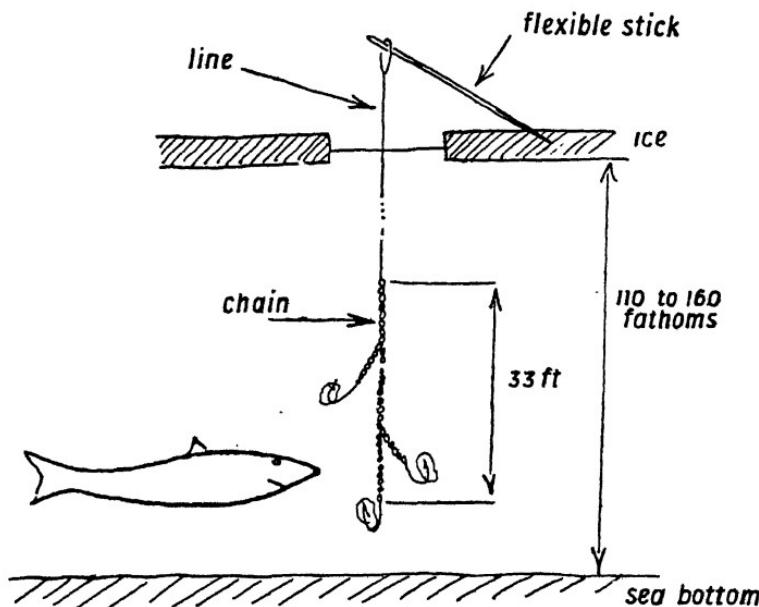
<sup>1</sup> The sharks fished for are those which live at the sea bottom (about 160 fathoms), and are generally known as the 'Greenland shark', or 'blueskins'. I used to fish for them with an ordinary line from 300 to 400 yards long, with a chain of not less than 30 feet in length attached to the end of it. On this chain there were three separate hooks, each one as long as a man's forearm, baited.

I made a hole in the ice about three feet in diameter, through which the line was cast. By the side of this hole I drove into the ice a ski stick, in a slanting position and at a distance which brought the handle immediately above the centre of the hole. When the line had touched the bottom, I then drew it up again about 15 or 16 feet and hooked it over the ski stick: and the latter, being very pliable, acted as a warning signal that there was a shark (which always brushes against the bait before swallowing it) down below.

*Sunday, 20th December, 1936.*

The temperature was down to 13° below zero; and in my hut this morning it was 4° below.

I fished for shark, but had no sport. At midday, in the direction of the Ikasakajik Pass the whole of the ice-pack along the horizon stood out as a line of blue against a background of golden sky; but the sun remained hidden.



The year was starting badly. There were no sharks; no salmon; my best dogs were dead; the fjord had hardly begun to freeze; seals were scarce. And perhaps worst of all, Yoanna, my chief source of information, was dead.

*Monday, 21st December, 1936.*

Taking advantage of the feeble light which midday afforded, I hunted seal from cover. For the first time I used the Mauser. A bullet entered a seal's lower jaw and reduced the head to pulp, making a hole nearly a foot wide. The

eyes were driven outwards for more than two inches and all their nerves and muscles with them.

*Tuesday, 22nd December, 1936.*

Earthquake at San Salvador  
Three hundred killed and thou-  
sands injured, a town destroyed  
and a whole district panic  
stricken.

The Pope condemns Hitlerism  
and Communism.

(Press extracts added in December 1937)

The shortest day of the year. From 11 a.m. till one o'clock there was a faint glimmer of light which would have been too feeble to allow of reading. At nightfall (that is, at about one o'clock) the expected change in the weather duly arrived; the sky became rapidly overcast and snow began to fall.

Mikidi, Kristian and Doumidia were in my hut.

'Well,' Mikidi said, 'now let's fill a glass right up to the brim, for to-night.'

'Why?' I asked. I was very curious to know.

'Because when the earth stops to-night at midnight to turn back again, a little of this water will be spilt.'

'When the earth stops?'

'Yes, of course,' Doumidia said. 'That is why the days are shorter in winter than in summer. It's because the earth' (and she accompanied her explanation by moving her hand up and down) 'bends over and turns backwards.'

I burst out laughing. I could not help it. I had no doubt that this was a recent belief of European importation. Hitherto the people here had never dreamed of explaining the days and the seasons by a movement of the earth.

Doumidia was silent and evidently wished to say nothing further; and it was Kristian who continued the discussion.

'We were told so by the people who live in big houses at Tassidik' (i.e. by the shopkeeper, the pastor, etc.).

Thereupon, with my hurricane lamp and a ball of wool fixed on a knitting needle, I embarked on an explanation of the days and the seasons, and the cause of the longest and shortest day. They were inclined to believe me, and were ready to give up their theory that the earth turns round backwards and recovers itself later. But I could not be sure that no doubt still lingered in their minds.

I spent a considerable time during the night in preparing Christmas presents.

*Thursday, 24th December, 1936.*

*3 o'clock in the morning.* During the night I heard Mikidi's thick, heavy voice:

'It doesn't seem like Youtli to-day.' ('Youtli' is the Eskimo pronunciation of the Danish word 'Julé', Christmas.)

A silence followed, and was broken by Kristian's voice, also heavy and thick.

'It really doesn't seem like Christmas to-day.'

'Wake up, all of you. To-day is Christmas,' Mikidi cried out, but without much conviction, supporting himself on his elbows.

'It's Christmas to-day.'

'It's Christmas to-day.'

The whole hut was quickly awake, with cries of 'It's Christmas to-day' from grown-ups and children alike. Patsiba cried and screamed because she had been awakened, and Kidimanni, still half asleep, pummelled her mother with her two fists, shouting out, 'Leave me alone, I want to go to sleep.'

A match was struck; it was Mikidi lighting his pipe. The tiny, flickering flame revealed Mikidi's face and Paoda's hands as, in the semi-darkness, she crushed pieces of fat to extract oil for the moss used as wicks for the oil lamps. Then she lit the moss; and the hut, which until

then would have seemed dead but for the noise within it, received added life through light. Soon every lamp was burning; the display of light was truly festal. The whole hut talked and shouted in chorus:

'It's Youtli to-day.'

Doumidia turned over on her face, stretched out her arm, and struck a match with which she lighted a little ounakrit which rested on a low table by my head. This she had prepared during my sleep, knowing what pleasure it would give me.

'You see, it's just as if we were married,' she said to me.

After an infernal din which had lasted for half an hour, Kristian got off the platform, clad in his drawers. Scratching his side, he brought me a little parcel wrapped in newspaper. The giving and receiving of presents had begun.

I unwrapped the paper; and a horrible, grimacing mask was revealed. Mikidi and Odarpi also each handed me a parcel; these also contained masks. From Paoda I received a little sealskin bag embroidered with decorative designs in white. Kara gave me a beret made from birds' skins, and Doumidia a pair of embroidered kamiks.

'And now it's my turn,' I said.

Silence reigned. At my feet on the platform lay an enormous bag into which I had put the presents yesterday. One by one, amid a general hush of expectation, I took the parcels out and read out the names.

'Kidimanni,' I said.

'Kidimanni!' Every voice in the hut repeats the name, in tones of surprise or of envy.

Little Kidimanni came to me, took the parcel which I handed to her, and which contained a red pullover and some chocolate, drew herself up on tiptoe, sniffed at the end of my nose with the tip of her own tiny one, and having said her 'Anertsadi' to me, blushing as she did so, returned to her platform.

'Kristian!'

The whole hut takes up the cry, shouting 'Kristian' at the top of their voices.

Kristian came to me, saying, 'What, me too?' 'Rather, I should think so,' I answered, as I handed him a parcel containing a pair of old climbing shoes, nailed. For a moment he remained speechless; then he too spoke his word of thanks.

'What! Aren't you going to kiss me?'

'Oh no,' he replied. 'You don't smell nice. You've got the Kratouna smell.'

'No, no, it isn't true,' Doumidia protested. 'He hasn't smelt like that for a long time.'

'Tigayet!' The whole hut shouts the name after me. My presents to her were a scarf, stockings, and some beads.

'Thank you,' she said, smiling. 'You don't want me to kiss you?'

'No,' I replied. 'Odarpi would be jealous.'

'I shall never be jealous of you,' Odarpi declared. And Tigayet rubbed my nose with the tip of her own, sniffing it!

'Tipounguiyouk!' The shouts were renewed; and Tipou emerged from her blanket and came over to me, quite naked.

'That's for you,' I said, handing her a new chemise. 'You can make yourself a dress out of it. And here's something else for you too.' And I handed her a woollen cap, some chocolate, and some beads.

'Anertsadi,' she said.

'But I haven't finished yet,' I told her. Tipou was a daughter of Odarpi's by a former marriage. Tigayet hated her, and Odarpi accordingly took no further interest in her.

'To-day is Christmas,' I said to her, 'and to-day you have become my daughter. You shall be my adopted daughter and I your adopted papa. Would you like that?'

'Oh, yes, I *should*,' she said.

There she stood, with her parcels in her arms, looking at me with eyes in which there were traces of tears. Suddenly she dropped all her parcels on to the platform and threw her arms round my neck. I felt the tip of her cold, damp little nose sniffing at me. The whole hut was in an uproar. I took a furtive glance at Tigayet.

And the distribution went on.

*Midday.* We went hunting at the outer end of the fjord, which was frozen nearly as far as the mouth, where the compactness of the ice-floe would soon be closing it completely.

I killed a seal; and as we had no kayak, we cut out a piece of ice from the floe, and Kristian used it as a raft to take the seal home.

*4 p.m.* Everyone was thoroughly washed and combed, and wearing his best clothes.

Kristian, who conducts the service, had put on his long trousers and the nailed shoes I had given him, in which he walked about like a cat on hot bricks. Above his white jacket the collar of his shirt appeared, and over this the inevitable celluloid collar several inches high. His trousers were much too long for him; and altogether his appearance was lamentable.

As soon as the service was over I went to my hut, where I had hidden it, to fetch the little Christmas tree which I had made on the previous day from bits of planking taken from old packing-cases. Outside, the wind was rising and there were large snowflakes falling; whilst within my little hut I found an atmosphere only of peace and happiness. On my return to the hut with the tree, I was greeted by a storm of cheering.

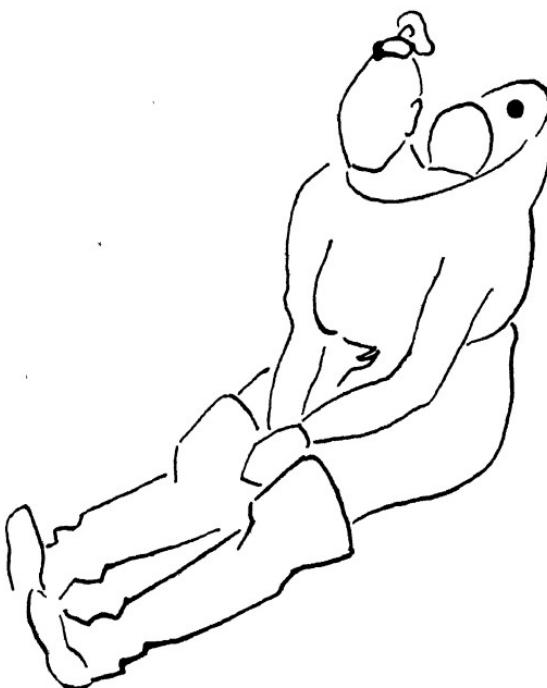
The candles were put in place, and to imitate the foliage Odarpi planed a plank and the shavings were placed on the 'branches' of the tree. With some odd pieces of chocolate wrapped in newspaper and a few toys and lighted candles, the tree presented a fine appearance.

'Blow out the ounakrit,' Kristian said.

The tree was now the only point of light in the low-roofed hut. Holding each other by the hand, old and young alike proceeded to make a ring and dance round and round it, whilst they sang a song which, to my utter amazement, I immediately recognised:

'Mon beau sapin, mon beau sapin'—in Eskimo. And whilst they continued their singing, in a garbled imitation of the language of the West coast, I myself also sang, in French. . . .

When the dance was over, Kristian gave the children an explanation of the meaning of Christmas, which ended with the following exhortation:



'And you should thank God and Wittou for having given you such a lovely Christmas tree this year.'

Having brought his little sermon to an end, Kristian proceeded with much ceremony to shake hands with the whole company and wish them a happy Christmas. His brows were knit, and his whole expression was one of grave austerity.

'Youthi Pitlouarit.'

The whole of the little ceremony had been copied from the pastor.

'He's simply wonderful,' Doumidia murmured.

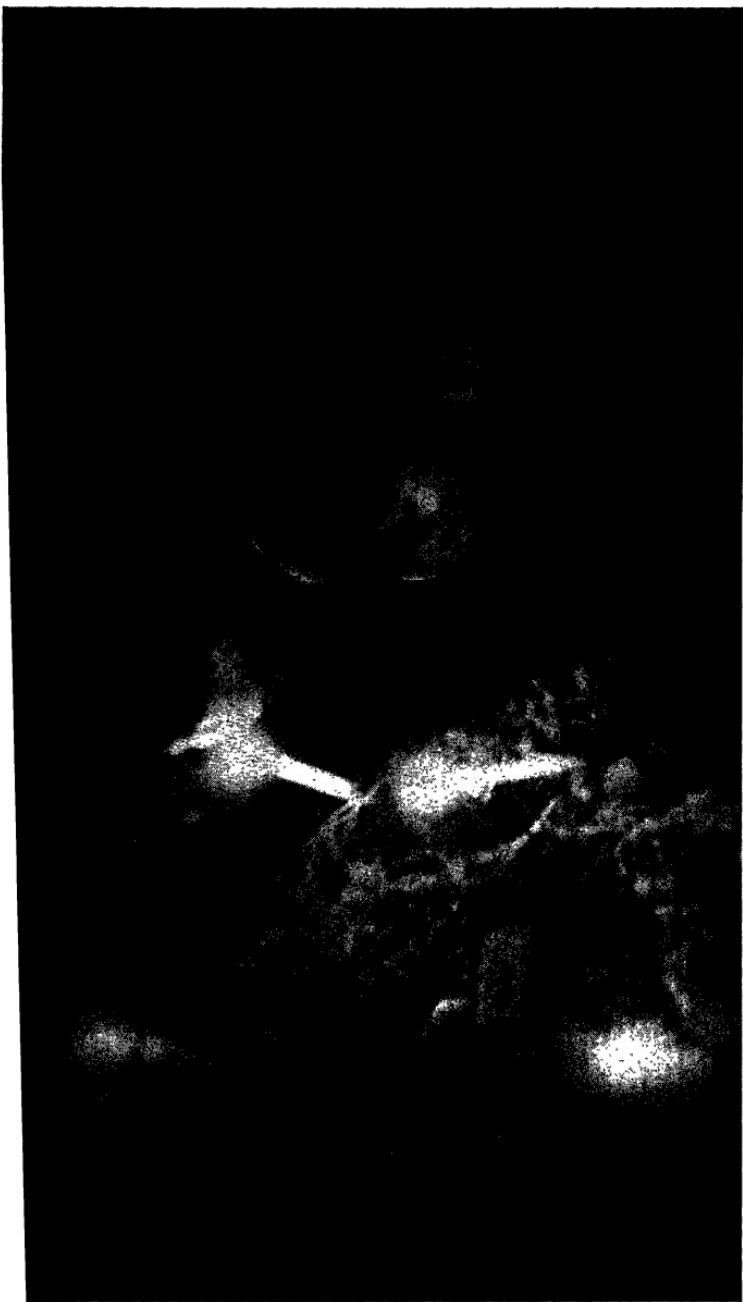
Then, each and all of us rushed madly to the exit, out into the wind, the falling snow, the black darkness, and gave ourselves up to a wild, unrestrained game of snowball.

*8 p.m.* Whilst I was alone in my hut and preparing to open the little parcel on which the maternal hand had written the words 'For Christmas', outside my window the strains of a psalm sung by childish voices fell upon my ears: and above these voices, more solemn and more assured than they, Doumidia's voice uprose.

It was fortunate that I was alone. . . .

*9 p.m.* In the hut we were all in bed and would soon be asleep. The hour was nine o'clock. In Europe it was nearly midnight, and the orgy would soon be in full swing.

CHRISTMAS





## CHAPTER IX

### DAWN

*Friday, 1st January, 1937.*

I set a seal net<sup>1</sup> and a trap for foxes at the Cape of Arpertileq. I started at eleven o'clock at night and reached home again at about 1.30 a.m.

*Monday, 4th January, 1937.*

Secret marriage of Jacques Deval  
at Hollywood.

Greta Garbo receives the Grande  
Médaille du Mérite from the  
King of Sweden.

(Press extracts added in December 1937)

Having been deprived since Kranorsouak's death of a dog competent to act as leader, I put my dogs once more into the fan formation, with the result that their pace was greatly improved. This formation enabled them to feel that they were running together in company, and there could be no doubt that it gave them far more enjoyment. The dogs needed training to teach them to keep their proper places; but a careful selection of the order in which they were harnessed would suffice for that.

<sup>1</sup> The meshes of the net are about eight inches square. The first step to be taken is to find a spot near the shore where the water is fairly deep. Three holes are then made in the ice, one for each extremity of the net and one for the centre. Next, by means of a pickaxe with a long wooden handle which is thrown into one of the holes in such a manner as to bring it out through the other, the cord running along the top of the net is drawn below the ice; and the two ends and the centre are then attached to blocks of ice placed vertically at the sides of the holes. It is important to remember to place snow over the holes to prevent the net from being seen by the seal.

*Tuesday, 5th January, 1937.*

The weather was wretched. By the light of a small oil lamp in the hut I continued the alterations to my sleigh.

Tsingarnak was dead. He had been ill for two days. As I was starting off with the sleigh this morning, I saw him lying stretched out as though he were asleep. Immediately I set them free to harness them, Tioralak and Neviartok dashed at him and took a long sniff at him, thinking that he was dead. Then, seeing that there was still life in him, they closed their teeth on him, one at the throat and the other at the stomach, and shook him like a piece of rag. I got them away, and before starting I asked the men to finish him off with a revolver. When Mikidi went to him shortly afterwards with my revolver, he was already dead.

Immediately after the service, Kara removed the skin, and without further delay we towed him over the ice to the spot where my shark lines were set. We were to make an amartsiwit.

A hole was made in the ice about sixteen feet long by ten feet wide, at one end of which we placed Tsingarnak's carcase, dangling beneath the surface of the water. Through the hole and into the sea we threw two or three stones to which some lumps of decayed fat had been secured. In the evening we should return to investigate results.

At the time of Tsingarnak's death, one of Mikidi's little puppies also died. He was called Pâro (he who is covered with soot) because he was black. Smaller than Timertsit, he was already working in harness as conscientiously as an old dog. He too had been ill for several days and was continually stretching himself out full length. He had probably eaten some stray bits of cloth or other material; possibly one of Doumidia's stockings, which were always trailing about everywhere.

As I was going out of the hut at about five o'clock this

morning I discovered him, completely crushed, with four or five puppies lying curled up on the top of him. Doubtless they found him warmer than the snow.

*4 p.m.* We went out to the amartsiwit in the darkness, amid falling snow which deadened the sound of our footsteps. Timertsit and Ekridi played around me, and I could see their little dark forms as from time to time they vanished quickly into the night and then reappeared a few yards away from me.

We arrived at the edge of the hole and stood there and waited patiently. It is a common supposition that sharks are attracted by noise, but as there were only Kristian and myself we kept silent. I could feel the snowflakes melting on my face. There were sounds of rending ice, and I could hear the wind as it blew over the mountain tops. Over the surface of the hole ice was forming rapidly, with wrinkles like those on the skim of milk. Kristian knelt down, and with the lid of a saucepan which I had brought for the purpose he cleared the surface of the water: I could see him there at my feet, his head covered with a hood nearly as wide as his own broad shoulders.

'There's one,' he said.

Down in the black water, a long, phosphorescent form appeared, slowly advancing, and passed beneath the hole and disappeared. It was a shark of large dimensions; and it would soon come once more to the surface. Its reappearance was, in fact, not long delayed; and I could clearly make out the tail as it moved slowly from side to side, stirring up ripples on the surface of the water.

And now, right in the middle of the hole, there emerged from the water a huge, wide open mouth from which there came forth a deep, gurgling, rumbling sound. Slowly, gradually, the enormous brute turned over, displaying a stomach rather paler and more phosphorescent than his back, moving slowly towards the dog's carcase, and opened wide his mouth and closed it again, with several jolts against the edge of the ice, at a distance of about eighteen

inches from the bait. At that moment, without further ado I drove a large hook nailed to the end of a rod into the shark's lower jaw, striking below the teeth. At the same time Kristian, uttering a shrill cry, drove his harpoon into the body, leaving the point firmly fixed a few inches above the fin. By our united efforts we then succeeded in hauling up the huge creature, which slowly writhed and twisted as it lay stretched out on the ice.

We caught four in three hours.

Before returning to the hut, I set my shark line across the hole with the upper part of the chain resting on the ice, and fixed it to a stake firmly driven in. I hoped that a shark might come along the next day and allow himself to be caught.

*Wednesday, 6th January, 1937.*

At midday, despite the wind and the snow I went to see how my line had fared. With my heels I kicked away the ice which had formed over the hole and drew up the chain. On one of the three hooks there was a shark's head cut clean away at the base of the ears. He must have been caught during the night and devoured by his own species.

After our success in this method of fishing, grown-ups and children alike came through the storm, at about two o'clock in the afternoon when night was falling, to the edge of the amartsiwit.

With the arrival of darkness, five or six sharks lay swarming together in the pool, and to an accompaniment of shouts and cries we harpooned two of them. A third one, with much lack of foresight, came and placed its head on the edge of the ice; whereupon little Ogui darted at him and buried his fingers in the viscous eyes, trying to drag him out.

'Gâba, Yosepi, come and help me!' he cried. They, however, were busily engaged in hauling up the two which we had harpooned. Tigayet then ran to Ogui, herself also

dug her fingers into the shark's eyes, and between them they succeeded in drawing up half of its body on to the ice.

'Hold tight,' she said to Ogui.

She removed her fingers, leaned forward, bit into the fin, and pulled with all her strength until the shark was entirely clear of the water.

*Friday, 8th January, 1937.*

The bad weather still continued, with wind and snow and the thermometer at zero. The snow on the fjord was growing deeper and deeper, and a world of unrelieved white was all that could be seen.

6 p.m. I had fished for shark all day, with a total bag of six, which for the most part I hauled up without assistance. I was feeling rather exhausted, having eaten nothing during the whole day. Then Kara took my place, and soon had five to her credit.

As I was emptying the stomach of one of these, I drew out on to the ice a shark's tail which I had thrown into the water an hour earlier, and a codfish as big as a man's arm, perfectly white, and with large black eyes dripping with slime. Kara gathered it up and carried it off.

'What do you propose to do with it?' I asked her. 'Give it to the dogs?'

'No, it's for myself.'

Kara was crouching down and rummaging in the basin which hung above the ounakrit. She took out a piece of white flesh on the point of a little spear-head and offered it to me. I asked her what it was.

'It's the cod that was in the shark's stomach,'<sup>1</sup> she replied.

*Sunday, 10th January, 1937.*

At the height of a snowstorm, with Yosepi's help I brought back the sharks which I had caught. The gusts of snow were so violent that the dogs ahead of the sleigh were blotted out by them.

<sup>1</sup> I ate it.

'Wretched weather,' I said to Yosepi.

'Yes, but what fun it is.'

Working in darkness, snow, and wind, soaked, dripping with water, with snow lashing my face and penetrating my clothes at every point – all that I had endured during my crossing of the Inlandsis. But what a difference now! – now that there was a hut awaiting me, a hut near by, a hut in which I could change my clothes, and where in a few moments I should be enjoying blessed warmth.

There is a story handed down by ancient tradition which tells how there lived near Koudousouk three Kratouna. One of these was married; and during the absence of the husband and his companion, the third one slew the wife and escaped to the South.

When the two men returned, they found the wife dead, with her baby crying at her side. Thereupon the father cut off the nipple of his breast with a knife, and the baby sucked the blood. But soon the blood became changed into milk, and the child lived.

I pulled up the seal net at Tsounayik, which was about 600 yards away from the hut.

I had made the experiment of harnessing Timertsit and Ekridi to the sleigh. These two wretched little dogs, whom it was difficult enough to keep in check when I started off with the sleigh, and who were accustomed on such occasions to indulge in mad frolics and get in the way of the other dogs, allowed themselves to be dragged along by their traces in a most distressing manner, uttering absurd little cries as they did so.

A few days earlier I had taken Ekridi alone, and a blow on her hindquarters with the handle of the whip had sufficed to make her understand what was required. During the whole of the outing she had behaved like a good, brave little dog.

To-day it was Timertsit's turn. But this was a different story altogether. She hung back on her trace, and howled

and cried bitterly, with her mouth wide open and her eyes staring. My nerves were all on edge, and in order to avoid giving her the thrashing which my exasperation made it difficult to withhold, I set her free there and then. No sooner had I done so than she began to caper and frisk about in her usual manner.

In the net at Tsounayik I had found a dead seal.<sup>1</sup> He had made a struggle, and the bottom of the net had got twisted round him. The small pebbles placed at the bottom of the net for sinking it had become entangled in the meshes, and I spent more than two hours putting the net in order again, my work being greatly delayed by the darkness and falling snow and my own bare, wet, frozen hands.

*Monday, 11th January, 1937.*

I had a thrill this morning. Returning to my hut, I pushed open the door and stood there for moment shaking myself in order to get rid of the snow with which my shoulders and my kamiks were covered. When I got inside I heard distinctly a noise which exactly resembled that made by a woman as she rakes out the ashes of a coal stove before she begins to light the fire. In a flash, I had a vision of all kinds of warm, comfortable corners and cosy fire-sides.

My dogs, which for some time past had not been eating to my own satisfaction, to-day were replete. In their basin there might have been seen a well-contrived mixture of sharks' stomachs emptied of their contents, liver, and intestines.<sup>2</sup> My mood was now entirely changed; I felt that I had not a care in the world.

<sup>1</sup> It had been asphyxiated, having been unable to come up to the surface to breathe. (Seals are mammals.)

<sup>2</sup> Shark's flesh in a fresh condition is harmful to dogs as well as to human beings. In dogs, it causes paralysis of the hindquarters and intense diarrhoea, and headaches and attacks of giddiness in human beings. After a period of four or five days it becomes wholesome for dogs.

As regards men, it is eaten by them only when very high, if raw; or after being cooked on a very slow fire for a period of from twenty-four to forty-eight hours.

Kristian was teaching the children to read as they sat in a circle around him, each one reading in turn by the light of a small lamp illuminated with seal oil. Patsiba was sitting on the edge of the platform, red in the face, with her hair dangling over her eyes and her mouth full.

'Your turn,' Kristian said to her.

But she was quite incapable of uttering a word.

'What are you eating?'

Patsiba, with her cheeks a still deeper red, and shining with perspiration, thereupon ejected the saliva with which her mouth was filled, and said:

'I've crushed a louse between my teeth.'

*Tuesday, 12th January, 1937.*

It had been snowing ceaselessly for nearly a fortnight. The wind dropped to-day, but there was mist. The only food we had had was seal which had been netted; all our reserves were exhausted and I was growing worried. The men and I hunted all day, starting before daybreak and returning only when darkness had already fallen once more; but not a solitary seal did we see, not a single bird.

The alterations to my sleigh were now complete. My work on the runners had been so successful that the sleigh could now slide along unaided at the slightest declivity.

*Wednesday, 13th January, 1937.*

It was still snowing, and the mist was becoming continually denser. One sank deep into the light, powdery snow, which reached as high as the waist. To take the sleigh out in such weather as this was not to be thought of; even with skis or snow-shoes the snow came over our knees.

If only it would rain, just once! With this covering of snow, we should then have the finest surface for the sleigh that we could ever wish for.

I gave a quantity of string to the three men, sufficient to enable each of them to make two seal nets; and taking



AN ICEBERG



advantage of the bad weather, they busied themselves at this task throughout the day. This, if the bad weather continued, might well be the only means of obtaining seal for a long while to come.

To-day, when my dogs had stuffed themselves with a mixture of shark's stomach, crushed liver and the meat cut up into small pieces, I placed before each of them a whole half of a shark, which they could eat as they felt inclined.

Ogui came into my hut. I asked him what he wanted.  
'I've come to fetch what is in your ash-tray, for Kara.'

Kara preferred ashes to tobacco for chewing.

As usual, Ogui spoke to me without a trace of shyness. His breath smelt like a urinal, but a urinal with a smell which would prevent me from ever entering it. He had just been eating high shark.

*Thursday, 14th January, 1937.*

It still snowed unceasingly, and there were no signs of the mist lifting.

Since the snow began, Ekridi and Timertsit had been refused permission to come into my hut, as they made everything wet that they touched. As soon as I heard the sound of the outside door, which opened and closed of itself, I would yell 'Aninietsi!' which may be translated as 'Get out!' and immediately I would hear the same sound.

To-day the outside door had become blocked by the snow, and I failed in consequence to hear it open. But a small, suspicious noise behind me made me turn my head. In the tiny entrance at the foot of my bench there was Ekridi, her hindquarters still in the opening. She looked at me, waiting, with her head lowered and her ears drawn back, a picture of submissiveness and humility. My resistance broke down, and I told her to come in.

Doumidia had a pillow (the one which I had given her

last year) which was now black with dirt; and as she lay beside me on the platform that pillow, near my own head, rather worried me.

'Won't you ever wash it?' I had asked her the evening before.

'Oh, yes,' she replied.

She then proceeded to rummage about in the indescribable medley which resided in her small white box, took out her best dress of pale blue satin (the one which I had given her a year earlier), and wrapped her pillow in it. She then laid her head on the pillow and pulled my hair.

'Is that better?' she asked, as she made a face at me.

Kristian and Doumidia played at Ayangak.<sup>1</sup> Both displayed much skill; and almost every time it fell the seal's collar-bone pierced with holes impaled itself on the point, which they held between the thumb and forefinger.

*Friday, 15th January, 1937.*

The wretched weather still held on, and the only food now remaining was my rice, haricot beans, lentils, and macaroni. Each day I had an enormous basin cooked, filled to the brim with these, and we all dipped into it. Knowing how hungry the others were, I felt it impossible to eat freely myself; and this only added to my appreciation of the sticky black bread which I made over the oil lamps, and shared with the children.

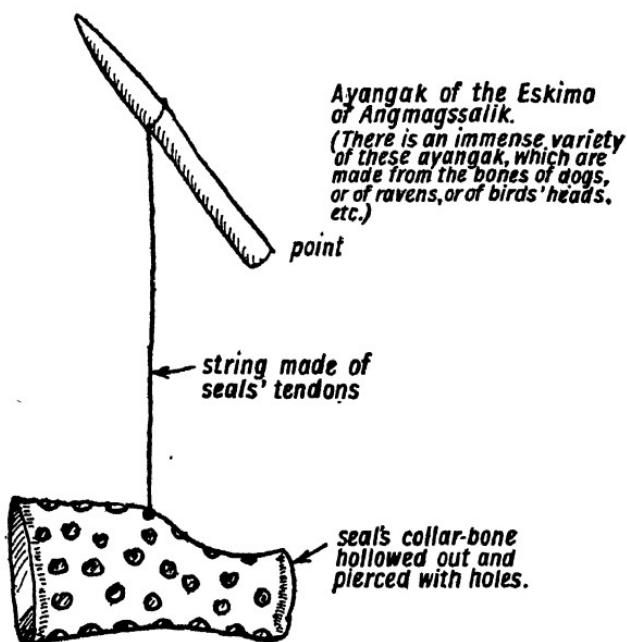
Doumidia made a great fuss of Timertsit and Ekridi, taking them in her arms and rocking them to and fro, and playing with them. She buried her nose in their fur, sniffed at it, and then looked up and said to me:

'You know, I think of those little creatures as though they were men.'

<sup>1</sup> A species of the game of cup and ball which can be played in a number of different ways. The point may be held between any two fingers of the hand; like a dagger; in the hollow of the arm; between the shoulder and the ear; in the teeth, and even in a nostril. The ayangak itself may be caught from any of these positions after being thrown up in the ordinary way, either in front or behind; after throwing it over backwards, etc.

Then she rose, came over to me, pulled my hair, and said:

'And him, too, I think of him as a man.'



Imprisoned in the hut by the bad weather, my companions came to me every day and asked for the gramophone. Together with a few discs, they bore it off with an air almost of reverence, set it with scrupulous care, and took every precaution against placing their fingers over the discs, as I had taught them. Then they listened without uttering a word.

A tremendous success with them was jazz, which made them laugh. But their real preference, when I was there and allowed them to use them, was for the records of Beethoven, Chopin, or Bach.

The music of the great masters had been revealed to them.

I made some harness and traces for the dogs and straps for the sleighs; and adjusted the tent on the new sleigh, despite the bad weather. I wanted to be ready when better conditions arrived.

*Saturday, 16th January, 1937.*

A violent north-east wind, with the thermometer at 4° below zero. The light, powdery snow which covered the fjord was being lifted from the surface in a wild, unrestrained dance of whirling eddies.

I made a distribution of rice to-day. Tigayet wanted sugar too, and was dissatisfied.

I let Oukiok off the chain this morning. In spite of double rations, he was not putting on flesh and had failed to recover the fine appearance he had had when acting as team leader. I felt that he would do better if I set him free, judging by Arnatayik and Arnatak, who a month earlier had been at the point of death, and were now gadding about everywhere, sleek and fat, with their tails in the air, a very picture of health.

No sooner did Oukiok find himself at liberty than he made a bee line for Kratounarayik<sup>1</sup> and Neviartok,<sup>2</sup> his sons, to have his muzzle licked by them. Arnatayik and her daughters Neviartsiaq<sup>3</sup> and Kradibasok<sup>4</sup> came and joined them; and surrounded by these, Oukiok stood and received with much dignity their tokens of affection and respect.

His next move was a visit to my hut, where he discovered the shark lying just outside. He tore away strips of it, and having made a thorough feast, took a good look round. Nothing but females could he see—Arnataiyik, Arnatak, Kradibasok, Neviartsiaq, Odarpi's bitch, and Kristian's little bitch puppy. Thereupon he abandoned his shark

<sup>1</sup> The rascally Kratouna, the little Kratouna.

<sup>2</sup> The shopkeeper.

<sup>3</sup> The young lady.

<sup>4</sup> The painter.

and, followed by the whole of his harem, lifted his leg at every dozen yards.

My hut looked for all the world like one of those delicious little houses that one sees on a Christmas card. My window, now on a level with the snow, shone out into the night with a smiling cheerful aspect, in the depths, so it seemed, of a grotto of snow and ice. The hut was very low and all the corners were rounded off; and thus it made brave resistance against every wind that blew. The entrance had now entirely disappeared in the bottom of a hole.

It was just a little doll's house.

*Sunday, 17th January, 1937.*

Arnatak, who had now put on flesh and was in the sprightliest of moods, played about like a little puppy. Oukiok had already noticed her. With the tip of his muzzle he kept pushing her in little fits and starts, tickling her at sensitive spots, the hips, the ribs, the base of the neck. Then he laid his head on her back and leaned his chin upon it. As there was no response forthcoming he raised a paw and laid it over her neck. That move having failed — a leap, with ears turned backward, and his objective was attained. But Arnatak turned and sent him to the rightabout. Thereupon he trotted off to Odarpi's wretched old bitch.

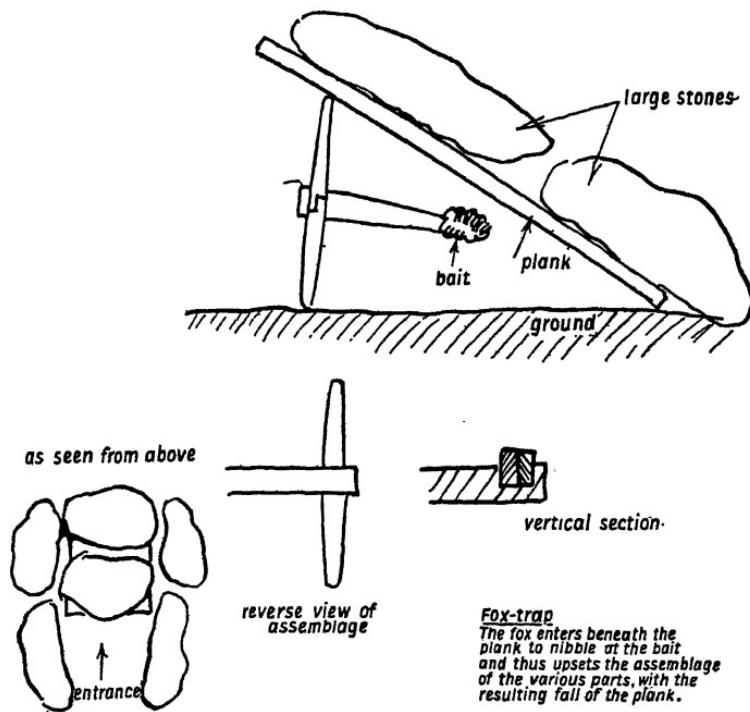
In this case, love was accompanied by greater understanding. They liked each other, and their mutual intentions were never in doubt. To press his suit, Oukiok was content to move along at her side, stopping when she stopped, moving forward again as she did, and eating snow at the same time as she.

Later, I saw Oukiok at my window, alone. He sniffed here and there, lifted his leg and left two or three yellow drops, and went off again. A few moments later the old white dog also appeared. She stopped and scratched herself, and in so doing began to sniff around as Oukiok had

done. After some search she found the three drops, squatted down, and then departed.

*Tuesday, 19th January, 1937.*

Doumidia was sitting on my bench, in a pensive mood.  
'Kristian has written to me,' she said.



I turned round, looked at her, and asked her what Kristian wanted.

'Oh, nothing.'

'Does he want to give you another skin?'

'Oh no,' she replied, 'it's about his children.'

Taking advantage of a slight improvement in the weather, Kristian went to pull up my net at Arpertileq. He found it hopelessly entangled and torn. A seal must have

been caught in it, and struggled until it had managed to free itself. And there were we who for several weeks past had been living on a diet consisting exclusively of rice and kidney beans. . . .

Kristian arrived back from Arpertileq as the snow was beginning to fall again. Over his back he carried two huge codfish, half dry and in a very high condition, which he had placed beneath stones in the autumn. At the foot of the cliff of ice which now extended from my hut down to the ice-pack on the fjord, he stopped and held out some shapeless object for me to see.

'We've dropped a lot of money to-day.'

It was half the body of a blue fox, the half which had been crushed by the plank. The other half had been devoured by crows.

The small hut where I kept my stores was now no more than a slight excrescence in the snow. To enter it I had to jump into a hole some five or six feet deep, and to keep this clear I was obliged every morning to remove the snow which accumulated at the door.

'It's like one of my dreams,' Doumidia said. 'I often dream I am in a big house, and if I want to go out there's just one little hole that I can only get through by climbing.'

That Izââ is a rascal and a cad could hardly be denied. Last year he hauled up a seal in a net belonging to Karadousi. He dragged the seal a long way from the net and then fired at it to give the impression that he had killed it himself. Karadousi saw the trail and realised what had happened. And to increase Izââ's shame, when his wife came to dry the skin the marks of the net showed quite clearly, and completely gave him away.

Kristian was seated beside me on a packing-case in my hut, with his head bent over a sheet of paper laid out on the 'carpenter's bench'. For the space of two hours he had been heaving sighs at frequent intervals. His nose

glistened with perspiration. He was poring over the Bible and composing his 'sermon' for the following Sunday. This bright idea had occurred to him the week before.

Tigayet's loathsome character was becoming more and more noticeable, and everyone, in varying degrees, was feeling pity for her unfortunate husband. Kristian felt impelled to let him know how profoundly he sympathised with Odarpi. He came accordingly to my hut when the latter was there, and made him a sentimental little speech in the pidgin Eskimo used at the Sunday services, which consisted of the language of the West coast with an East coast pronunciation.

'What a clever man he is!' Doumidia exclaimed when he had left.

'But why does he make use of such gibberish?'

'It's because he wants to make his meaning quite clear and express himself properly.'

*Wednesday, 20th January, 1937.*

Snow, mist, and the usual wind, with 22° of frost.

I was eating porridge, when I asked Doumidia to fetch Tipou. The child came in, happy and smiling, with her hair falling about her face.

'What is it you want, papa dear - my adopted papa?'

'Look, that's for you, my little adopted daughter.' And I gave her the rest of my porridge.

'What a nice man he is, my dear little adopted papa,' she said when she had finished.

The heavy snow had melted the ice on which it had fallen, and the whole of the fjord was covered with a sort of liquid paste into which we sank as we walked, and in which our kamiks became embedded and half torn off.

I went shark fishing at an early hour; and the dogs needed all their strength to drag back the sleigh, loaded as it was with the fish, through the sticky mess. As we drew



KRIWI PEERS OUT OF THE OPENING OF THE SEALSKIN TENT



nearer and nearer, gradually there emerged from the mist, first the shore, and then my hut with its window at snow level, and Timertsit and Ekridi sitting up and watching my arrival and hardly able to contain themselves in their excitement.

Then Oukiok appeared on the scene. He stood at the door of my hut; and I had a sudden impression that he had gone down into a hole and come up again on the other side. . . . Something must have happened during my absence.

And I was right. While I had been away Odarpi, full of good intentions, had cleared away all the snow that lay in front of my door.

I was filled with dismay; for ever since the first fall of snow I had devoted special care to the appearance of my hut. I wanted it to look as nearly as possible like a house in a fairy-tale.

*Thursday, 21st January, 1937.*

Snow, mist, and a violent north-east wind which blew in gusts. There were now only 6 degrees of frost, and one could not stir outside without getting covered with a mixture of snow that melted as it fell.

Mikidi came into my hut without my hearing him and sat down beside me. I was reading the *Misanthrope*, and kept my eyes on my book. After a few minutes' silence he leaned over and whispered in my ear:

'Why shouldn't we set the singing machine going?'

Shortly afterwards I went over to the hut. Chaliapine was singing *Boris Godounov* – but not alone. The whole hut was accompanying him at the top of their voices.

The snowstorm was at its very worst this afternoon. I fed my dogs. This duty, which might appear to be a simple matter, actually involved prolonged effort and struggle against the tearing wind and the fresh, damp snow driven along by it in blinding sheets; wading and floundering about in this unyielding substance to reach the dogs and

set free some whose chains, no longer than one's arm, had become completely buried in the snow; distributing their portions of shark, and finally returning to my hut soaked almost to the skin. Fortunate indeed I was to have a hole and corner where I could remove my top jacket, white on the outside with its coating of snow, and dark with dripping water within.

And to think that it was in this sort of condition that we used to return to our tent at an altitude of about 8,000 feet!

6 p.m. So violent was the north-east wind that in my hut I had the sensation of being in an aeroplane in rough weather. It had made me feel giddy.

*Friday, 22nd January, 1937.*

Throughout the night the wind blew snow through the chinks in the window-panes on to the window platform where Yosepi, Doumidia and I slept.

As I went out this morning I felt a delicious little warm breeze on my face. The snow was damp, and lay about in small heaps, and the thermometer was just above freezing point. I was delighted; for with a renewal of the frost we should have an excellent surface, and all the more so if it should rain during the day, which might well happen.

Everyone was occupied in making skis - of Eskimo pattern, of course, that is to say, rather less than five feet six inches in length, in pinewood covered entirely with seal-skin, and very wide; the feet, shod in kamiks, being secured by a sealskin thong about six inches in width.

Seeing Doumidia out on the snow, Kristian felt a sudden desire to join her. He was wearing the climbing shoes which I had given him, but felt ill at ease in them; in addition to which the thong failed to secure them properly. After taking a few steps he removed the shoes and climbed to the top of the slope, with his feet bare on the

skis. He then came down at top speed and in perfect position and drew up in front of Doumidia, who was amazed.

'You're clever,' Mikidi said to me as he watched me making a seal net. I had taken advantage of weather which made it impossible to go out, and started on another net. I was still occupied on the first meshes, the upper ones. As I finished each mesh I took a small step backwards, and as I did so I felt, through the soft soles of my kamiks, the loose, shaky flagstones which made up the floor of the hut. After a short time I reached the opposite side, near the window platform, on which Doumidia was sitting. She laughed and, knowing that I could not release my hold of the net, pulled my hair and pressed a finger hard on the tip of my nose. But suddenly her expression completely changed, and her face grew serious.

'Get on, get on, let me pass, let me pass!' I wondered what could have happened.

I felt a severe jolt in my back. It was Tigayet who was hustling me.

'What on earth is the matter with her now?'

This question had barely presented itself to my mind when Tigayet was already stretched out at full length in all the water, mud, and general filth of the entrance passage, head downwards in a puddle, shrieking and sobbing. It was another fit.

In a flash, the hut was reduced to silence. Grave and serious expressions appeared on every face; but no one stirred. Tigayet's shrieks and groans were the only sign of life.

Kristian and Odarpi were outside, under the oumiaks; and I, breaking into the silence, suggested carrying her to the platform. But not a soul replied. Kara then went over to Tigayet; her cries and groans were incessant, and she was rolling about in the mud. At that point I myself took her by the feet and shouted for help to Mikidi, who at last got down from the platform on which he had been sitting passive and inert. Kara took hold of her feet, and

Mikidi and I her arms; and thus we bore the flaccid form, convulsed and twitching with sharp, sudden jerks, over to the edge of the platform.

Slowly, with the eyes half closed, Tigayet's head rose towards my hand, which was holding her wrist; and shrieking and yelling as she did so, she tried to bite me. Then I slipped on the damp planks of the chest and fell with a crash among the food tins which were full of oil and dirt. The situation struck me as comic, and I got up laughing; but no one moved a muscle. Finally, we laid Tigayet on the platform and returned to our several occupations; Kara to her kamiks, I to my nets, and Mikidi to his idleness.

I had barely taken up my netting again, when the expression I observed on every face around me made me turn my head. Tigayet was getting down from the platform; she then crawled on all fours from one end of the hut to the other, splashed through the puddles in the entrance passage, and thus passed out. She stretched herself out on the snow, and her sobbing was resumed with greater intensity than ever.

Then, suddenly, she began to speak. Her voice uprose in a kind of dirge, each phrase she uttered ending with a repetition of a single syllable, followed by sobs. In some curious way there was both music and poetry in all this, and I listened to it almost with pleasure. (But I understood then why she was so anxious to go out. There were things she wanted to say, and Kristian and Odarpi were outside.)

'When, when will my dearest aunt come back to me.  
(Yoanna.)

'How I long, how I long for her return.'

'If only she had been here, she would have given me some snow long, long ago.'

'She was the only one who took pity on me.'

'And now my mother is dead too. (When we left Tassis-saq, Kristian, her mother, was still alive and flourishing. Was this a prophecy?)

'And last year Tomazina (Kristian's first wife) told me that I should come here with her, and now she too is dead.'

All these sentences were spoken slowly and rhythmically, as though she were reciting verse.

Within the hut, Tabita was howling—as indeed she might. But all the rest were silent. Mikidi, who was helping me with the meshes for my net, had tears in his eyes. Paoda and Kriwi were on the platform, in a state of utter dejection, their heads buried in their hands. Kristian had now come in and was seated on his chest, looking completely exhausted.<sup>1</sup> Odarpi was outside in the midst of the storm, standing by his wife as she lay stretched out on the snow, and stoically waiting until her transports should cease. A few more sobs she uttered, and then there was silence. Mikidi and Kristian went out to fetch her, and with Odarpi's help they laid her on the platform. There she lay, limp and inert, quivering with tremors that shook her from head to foot.

And then, at long last, we were able to return to our various occupations. Even Odarpi went back to his oumiak without waiting until she recovered.

*Sunday, 24th January, 1937.*

. There was a violent north-east wind, with intermittent showers of rain. The thermometer was just above freezing point.

Last night my hut became a lake. The ice which had formed from the condensation of water in every corner, and especially in the loft, had now melted, and not a square inch was left dry. Even with the assistance of Kara and

<sup>1</sup> Every human being has at one time or another been moved at the mention of someone who has passed on; but this would be specially applicable in the case of the Eskimo who, in speaking of one who has died, never mention him by name. This taboo has been so strictly observed that up till only thirty years ago the name of an object or of an animal which bore the same name as that of someone who had just died, was changed.

*Example.* A man called *Naya* died about fifty years ago. Seagulls, which were called the *Naya*, had their name changed and became known as *Krouzit*.

Doumidia, it took me nearly two hours to put everything in order again. However, this rain and semblance of thaw were welcome; for they were necessary to the formation of the ice-pack, the construction of a good surface, and the welding of the ice blocks; and thus paved the way for our outings with the sleigh. Still, it was high time that these conditions ceased; the bad weather had lasted for more than a month.

'It's a hungry time,' Doumidia said, as she heaved great sighs. She certainly ate more than any of the rest of us; and the reason for this was that she took her food in my hut. On the previous evening she had nibbled away at shark for nearly an hour on end, beginning with a little rotten stuff which hung beneath Kara's drying apparatus, going on to a small quantity left in the large pan to get high, then a small piece of the head lying in a basin, and finally returning to the portion hanging beneath the dryer. And then the whole cycle would start afresh.

Tipou was seated beside me drawing pictures of men in skin jackets, with enormous pikiwa on their heads.

'I've gone mad,' she said.

'Why?'

'When Tigayet was crawling out of the hut the day before yesterday, I was so frightened that all I could think of was this: "Why can't somebody make up his mind to finish her off entirely?"'

I went out into the rain, the mist and the snow; and my eyes fell upon three darker patches which showed up clearly on the ice of the fjord, one of them larger than the other two. I stared at them for a few moments, my heart beating rapidly in my excitement. I felt convinced, as I watched them in the falling snow, that they were moving about, and dashed into my hut to get my glasses.

I saw three pieces of ice as yet untouched by snow.

8 p.m. A glorious, clear sky. The moon was at the full,

and looked as though she were running to meet the huge clouds with odd, fantastic forms which were being blown towards her. At ground level not a breath of wind could be felt. The temperature was at 4° below zero – and this morning it was raining! The whole company was out of doors, rejoicing at the possibility of a return of the fine weather for which we had all been longing.

I was in my shirt-sleeves until ten o'clock in the evening, busily engaged in polishing the runners of my sleigh; and Kristian, Odarpi, and Mikidi occupied themselves with their own sleigh. Plans and prospects were discussed.

'I shall go and see what the Anānak fjord looks like.'

'And I should like to have a look at the entrance to our fjord.'

'Well, I shall go to Kringuertewa. There may be seals on the ice already.'

It was midnight before we went to bed, in a state of great excitement. An hour later I heard Mikidi's voice:

'I'm still awake.' And Kristian, answering:

'I can't sleep, either.'

As for myself, I felt as though I shouldn't be able to sleep all night.

*Monday, 25th January, 1937.*

*Paris-Soir* publishes an account of the French Trans-Greenland Expedition, 1936.

Mutiny of 700 prisoners in a prison at Ontario.

A lifeboat sinks with 25 men.

Floods in the United States and in England.

(Press extracts added in December 1937)

I woke at five o'clock (so I had slept after all), and hastened to the window. The sky was overcast, the mountain tops were buried in mist, and snow was falling. The

bad weather had returned. I lay down again and turned over in my sleeping-bag, determined if possible to sleep; but by about seven o'clock I had grown weary of rubbing my sides against the badly-fitting planks of the platform; and notwithstanding the mist and snow I got up and started off with the sleigh in the darkness.

The dogs galloped along, delighted at the opportunity of bestirring themselves. But the whole team appeared suddenly to become obsessed with the idea of making straight for Ikasakajik as fast as their legs could carry them. Shouting at them, using my whip were equally useless; nothing could stop them. Were they attracted by the light of the sun, which was on the point of rising? When at last I succeeded in pulling them up, they lay down with their mouths wide open and tongues hanging out, hardly able to breathe. Without allowing them too much time to recover their breath I placed myself alongside them, to compel them to swerve to the right; and I had barely time to take a flying leap on to the sleigh before they were off again at a gallop. Then, after several long détours, I arrived at Arpertileq at last.

Still galloping at full speed, my dogs led me straight to an enormous drift of snow, an avalanche which had fallen on to the fjord and broken the ice. I succeeded in stopping them just at the edge of the chaotic mass. I then got off the sleigh in order to try and discover a suitable track; but I had hardly done so when I found myself gently sinking until I was immersed in water up to my armpits.

There was no seal in the net: and shortly afterwards the mist grew denser and snow began to fall once more, damp snow that was gently stirred by the north-east wind which was beginning to rise again.

On the way back I took my direction from the wind. The leading dogs were entirely blotted out by the mist; and every moment they were trying to veer away to the right, in a fresh attempt to make for Ikasakajik. When I reached the hut I was soaked to the skin.

RESULT OF SUCCESSFUL BEAR HUNT





Apropos of something or other, I gave my companions an explanation of the construction of a loom. A couple of hours later, by means of iron wire, nails, and planking, I had succeeded in making a primitive kind of loom with which, within about half an hour, I wove, with string, a plait a foot long by one and a half inches wide. The whole company was amazed at this exploit. That evening the men entered on a discussion of the various problems which had occurred to them, and their solution for improvements in the loom; suspension, combing, automatic movement of the treadles worked by the feet, etc.

Ever since the snow had first begun to fall, we had failed to pick up a single trail of a fox. These animals had been very scarce since the death of Mikadi, Karéna's husband.

On his way back from Tasissaq, this man had been caught by a violent north-west wind and was never seen again. But during that year a number of foxes were killed which bore suspicious and disconcerting marks on them. One of these had mangy feet as though he had eaten a man's liver; the muzzle of another was full of congealed blood. Several of them, instead of escaping at the approach of a man, seemed on the contrary to wish to reach him. But during the following year they became more and more scarce.

My lentils had long been finished, and my supply of haricot beans would soon be exhausted. My rice and macaroni were visibly decreasing. When, when should we be eating seal again?

Our hunger was increasing, and our anxiety with it.

Without saying a word to each other, Kristian and I were well aware that we should be making a journey at the earliest possible moment. Away down in the South, at a distance of more than a hundred and twenty miles, there was a shop. As soon as you entered that shop you would smell flour, tar, and materials of various kinds; and to

obtain bread, rice, sugar, figs, you had but to ask for them. . . .

*Tuesday, 26th January, 1937.*

Seated on the window-sill in my hut, opposite the fjord, I looked out into the darkness. Ekridi and Timertsit, sitting up at my feet with their ears cocked, gazed out in the same direction. From time to time one of them would raise her eyes to mine. We understood each other.

Not a breath of wind. The thermometer was down to 22° below zero, and my stove was no longer alight; but even so I could feel at my back the air from within the hut, and this seemed to warm me through and through.

Away in the distance, over towards the East and behind the mountains which concealed the entrance to the fjord, the aurora borealis had now come to birth. With her adornment of ribbons and fringes of light, she had spread herself in a long line which extended over the heavens as far as the desert of ice that lay over to the West, behind 'Nartidok'.<sup>1</sup> With all the brilliance of some rare fabric, and seeming as though the breath of life itself had entered her, she was the heart and soul of the night. You could believe that she fought, that she trembled, that she suffered, laughed, wept. At times she slept, passive, inert; then, suddenly, she would awaken, and her cheeks be suffused with a rose-pink tint. Then, weary of play, she vanished, only to re-appear straightway behind the great ice-pack which lay hidden behind the mountains at the entrance to the fjord.

A month had already passed since the sun's re-birth. Already high above the horizon were the two stars called 'attit',<sup>2</sup> whose appearance, together with the sun's, is the signal for the renewal of hope and joy.

Ndartsik, the star which during the Polar night rises and sets like the sun, shone brightly high in the heavens towards the South. Midnight must be approaching.

<sup>1</sup> The mountain with child.

<sup>2</sup> One of them is 'Atair'.

I heard the gentle cracking of the ice, with tiny whispering, hissing noises; it seemed as though each block of ice were talking, living, murmuring secrets to his neighbour. These were the only sounds I heard; and they were everywhere.

At the head of the fjord an avalanche roared and boomed in its descent; the mountain too would have his say.

Amidst this silence, unbroken save by the colloquy of that field of ice, another sound uprose. A hiccup and a sob, followed by a long, sustained, vibrating note, which seemed gradually to fill the whole of space, penetrating, pervading, enveloping the surrounding atmosphere. It died down, was heard no more, was then renewed in an ever-increasing crescendo of sound. It was the dogs' lament. The night was too great a burden for them.

Uneasiness and disquiet seized hold of little Timertsit and Ekridi. They turned and looked at me, at me their protector from all danger. What could have happened to those dogs? What could that strange thing be that seemed to rise from their very bowels to their throats – that seized them, grasped them, hurt them?

And soon, very soon, the little puppies were at the end of their tether. They lifted up their heads, closed their eyes, and began to weep, adding their own lament to the distant chorus.

With the smell of newly-fallen snow still upon my clothes and hoar frost on my face I entered the hut. Two oil lamps alone were burning. Odarpi and Tigayet had long been asleep; Mikidi was playing at blind man's buff with Tipou, Tada, and Ogui; Tekri, Kriwi, Yosepi, and Gâba were telling each other stories, with an accompaniment of shouts and cries; and Kristian and Doumidia were playing at ayangak. The light was dim and it was very hot; and the air was heavy with the perfume of furs, the smell of fat and meat, the vapour which arose from bowls and pans and human beings alike, and the musty odour of decay

which proceeded from beneath the flagstones, from the planking, the woodwork, and every nook and cranny in the hut.

I was awakened in the night by a violent disturbance which was taking place under the platform. There were growls, squeals, snapping and biting, puffing and panting, and frantic rushes to and fro; the little puppies had evidently been thieving. I could hear the noise of their feet on the zinc as they climbed into the large empty bowl, the overturning of basins, the pitter-patter of their feet as they walked over the fat which they had upset, and then a mad rush beneath the platform in the furious pursuit of the thief with the stolen morsel: and rising above all these noises, the barking and growling of their wretched old mother, who was chained up beneath where I lay and wanted her own share of the booty.

Again I was awakened, but this time it was not by the dogs. A sharp, shrill, nasal voice, charged with bitterness and ill temper, pierced the night like a sword. Tabita was in a rage.

'Ouma! Ouma!'

Odarpi shook his wife. But she continued to sleep (or to make a pretence of it). Odarpi thereupon took the howling bundle in his arms and tried to send it to sleep by the method which was usually the most successful, and which consisted of a series of hard knocks between the two little shoulder-blades accompanied by a slow, resounding, nasal cry - Aaaaaaa.

The baby's cries had barely ceased when others were to be heard on Mikidi's platform. These were soon followed by sounds of scraping with a mussel shell on the sealskin on which they slept. Kerti must have forgotten himself again.

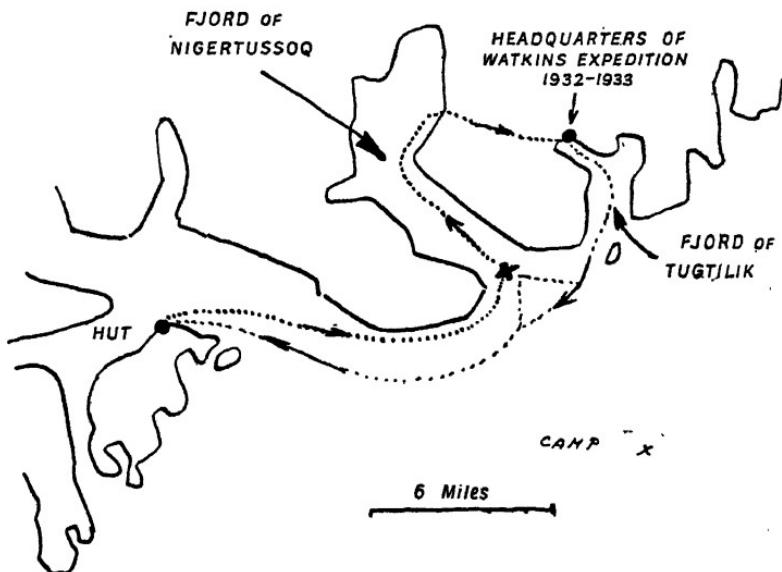
The next thing I heard was a terrific yell. 'Get down from there!'

This time it was neither the dogs nor Tabita who assailed my sleep. It was Odarpi shouting through the darkness with all the strength he could muster.

'Get down from there!'

Then I heard sounds of a dog scratching; he had come to eat the sealskins which kept the water from penetrating the roof. And as other dogs arrived and were constantly replacing each other throughout the night, so also did the yelling continue.

Such is the Polar night. . . .



*29th and 30th January, 1937.  
1st and 2nd February, 1937.*

We made a number of expeditions with the sleigh in the direction of Tugtilik, and discovered numerous tracks of bear. The weather was fine, and the temperature fell in consequence to  $26^{\circ}$  below zero.

*Saturday, 6th February, 1937.*

Snow had begun falling again since the previous day and

was accompanied by mist. The temperature had become fixed at  $18^{\circ}$  of frost.

Taking advantage of a slight improvement in the weather, I went out to give Ekridi and Timertsit a run, with the special object of giving the latter some much needed training. Until we reached the shark fishing-ground we were galloping at full speed; but beyond that point Timertsit flatly refused to go any farther, and I had to go through the usual performance once more. After giving her several light blows with the whip on her hind-quarters, I seized her by the neck with one hand and by the rump with the other, and shot her forward. I found that it needed a strong effort of will to control myself with a little animal so obstinate as she. Next, I tried shortening her trace, but this had no effect whatever on her usual tactics; and to complete my misfortunes, Yosepi arrived to join me with his sleigh. The passive resistance displayed by Timertsit immediately became an extremely active one, for she dragged on the trace in a backward direction with all her strength in an effort to reach him.

'Go on ahead,' I told Yosepi. 'And make a good long trip in the Ikasakajik direction and come back by the North.'

Having got the dogs back on to the track, and Yosepi being now far enough away, I started off once more. But Timertsit, who worked well enough in harness when she was in the mood, pulled madly in the direction of the sleigh which she could still see in the distance. Imperceptibly I got off the track, and gradually lost it altogether.

In the meantime Yosepi was carrying out my instructions and slanting off in a northerly direction on his way back to the hut. Timertsit, however, continued to drag at her trace. At times she betrayed some anxiety, lifting her head with ears cocked, and scanning the horizon till she saw that all was well. Suddenly she stopped altogether in order to get a better view. A crack of the whip in the air was then sufficient to make her understand that such behaviour was unworthy of her.

Without stopping the dogs, I gradually increased the length of her trace until it was the same as those of Ekridi (who had long since learnt what was required of her), Tioralak, and Kiviok. All was well.

So I should not have to kill her after all. . . (!)

During the night a mother bear and her cubs went over to the middle of the fjord and left traces. But it was too late to go out after them.

Kristian and I made a fresh study of the map this evening.

When I saw with what surprising rapidity the condition of the ice-pack becomes utterly changed through the action of snow and wind, emerging from a state of chaos and becoming real fjord ice, I became more and more convinced that we should find equally good conditions up above, on the glaciers.

*Wednesday, 10th February, 1937.*

*8 o'clock in the morning.* I was just leaving the hut, when Paoda said to me:

'I think it will be to-day.'

For several weeks past we had been awaiting the arrival of the new baby. The delivery would have been Yoanna's duty. In her absence it fell to Kara, who said to me:

'You know, when it arrives you will have to come and help me.'

'But I don't know anything about it,' I replied.

'Oh, but you must know. You're a Kratouna.' Paoda was then sitting on the platform, trimming her oil lamp.

'Well, I am going back to my hut,' I told her.

'Mind you come at once when I call you,' Kara insisted.

A quarter of an hour later I heard the door of my hut being violently opened, and Ogui's voice crying out breathlessly:

'Wittou, Wittou, come now - at once.'

I dashed outside, bumping my head against the top of

my door (which was about four feet high), and entered the hut like a whirlwind.

There I saw Paoda stretched out on the platform with her knees drawn up and covered with a blanket; whilst at the back of the platform was Kara, red in the face, and holding in her arms a horrible little creature, wrinkled, purple.

'So it's over?' I said.

'You can see for yourself,' Kara replied. 'Just now she said "It hurts. I'm going to lie down." Then, after she'd lain down, she told me to come and see. I put out my hand, and there was the child's head already. So you see I haven't wanted you after all.'

Paoda then turned her head towards me, smiled, and said:

'Does it happen as quickly as that in your country?'

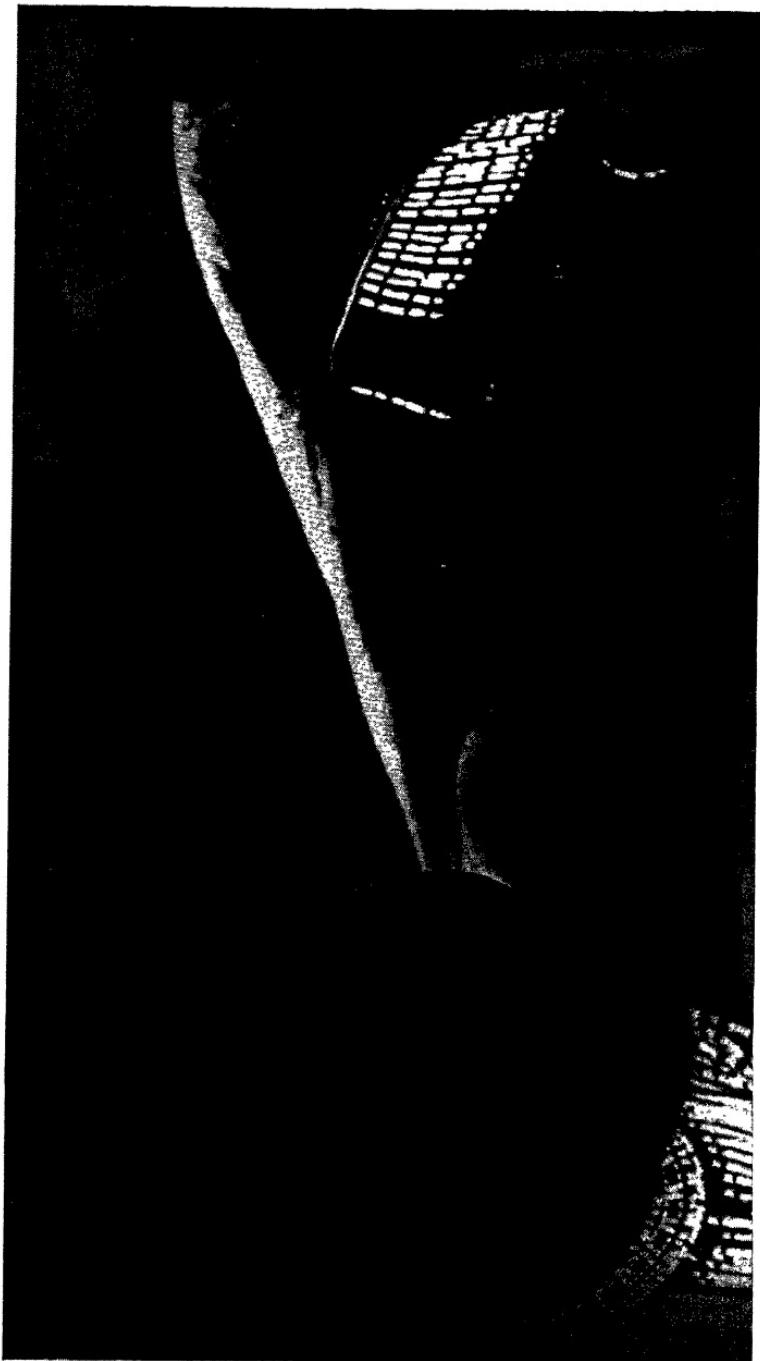
*Thursday, 11th February, 1937.*

Tipou had stayed awake all night in order to look after the baby. To prevent herself from falling asleep, she had smoked pipes continuously.<sup>1</sup>

Kristian unearthed his last Idiwitsi seal, there being in fact nothing else to eat. Once more the hut was filled with an atmosphere of blood, meat, vapour, and feasting. Yosepi carved chunks of meat which he put in the basin. Ogui, stark naked and seated close to the enormous brute, ate ceaselessly, with neither pause nor rest. Then he rose with difficulty with eyes and mouth wide open, arms dangling, distended stomach, and breathing in gasps.

'Eat!' Yosepi shouted to him, turning his head without rising, and looking angrily at the child; but Ogui had reached the limit of his endurance. Thereupon Yosepi rose and stuffed into his mouth a piece of meat the size of a man's fist; and this, after a bite or two, was duly swallowed. Then Ogui, voiceless and barely able to move, went and laid himself out on the window platform, hiccupping, belching, and quivering from head to foot.

<sup>1</sup> She was ten years old.



MOTHER AND CHILD



A few moments later I saw him again, vigorously carving a fresh portion for himself.

'Are you hungry again?' I asked him.

'All I ate just now is over there,' he replied. And he pointed to the black, gaping hole under the platform, where the puppies do the fighting. . . .

The heat in the hut, where the men continued to hack off their portions of the Idiwitsi to the accompaniment of shouts and cries, was stifling. But the whole company was shivering violently.

'It's always like that when we have a really good meal,' they told me.

*Friday, 12th February, 1937.*

Old Idisi's husband was a Kringaranguitsek.<sup>1</sup>

She spent a considerable portion of each night out of doors. When the weather was bad and there were snowstorms, she would come in again without a trace of snow on her clothing. Both Kara and her mother had seen her.

One evening Idisi said to Kara's mother and all the others who lived in the hut:

'When you hear someone enter, don't ask who it is, but keep quite quiet. It will be he. He will come this evening.'

That same evening, while some of the ounakrit were still burning, they heard someone coming along the entrance passage. A woman in the hut said:

'Who is it coming in like that?'

Then, half-way along the entrance passage, Kara's mother saw a man without a nose slowly disappearing into the floor, through the flagstones.

I asked Doumidia for a spoon. She took one from a saucepan, sniffed it, licked it carefully, and handed it to me.

6 p.m. Kristian came into my hut and sat down on my

<sup>1</sup> Beings which, according to the Eskimo, live underground. They are taller than men, and are minus a little finger.

bench; and I noticed that his eyes were shining and his cheeks on fire.

'What is it all about?' I asked him.

'What do you think?' he replied.

'What do I think of what?'

'About us.'

I had understood, but did not wish this to appear.

'About whom?'

'Us—Doumidia and me.'

'Well?'

'Do you think I could have her?'

'Indeed I do. And I am sure it will turn out splendidly. She is still rather young, and a husband like yourself is just what she wants—an older man who would be like a father to her. And I think, too, that she would be just the kind of wife you need, for she has a really nice mind.'

Kristian rose, and came over and embraced me.

'I shall go and ask her at once.'

*Saturday, 13th February, 1937.*

4 p.m. A fine interval in the weather, with blue sky and some golden, transparent clouds. There was a fall of temperature. At two o'clock the thermometer showed a reading of 24° above zero; and two hours later, 14° only.

Kristian came rushing into my hut. He was quite out of breath.

'Why shouldn't we go and try out our sleighs?'

'Is the weather likely to last?' I asked, feeling rather doubtful about the proposal.

'I'm not quite sure. But it may.'

A few moments later each of us was bending over our upturned sleighs. We scrubbed, scoured, and polished the runners until they shone brightly and reflected the evening glow in beams of silvery light. Then we loaded them up with our cases, tents, and the usual paraphernalia.

Kristian came over to me, his eyes bright with excitement, and said:

'Why shouldn't we start to-night?'

He was longing to be off, and trusted the weather. I myself was no less eager. But I had no confidence in the weather; the whole prospect seemed too good to be true.

At eleven o'clock this evening the sky was cloudless and the thermometer had fallen to 2° above zero. An excellent sign.

*Sunday, 14th January, 1937.  
An American farmer of 92  
marries a child of 9.*

*Emile Allais wins the World's  
Ski-ing Championship.*

(Press extracts added in December 1937)

I had a dream. Rain had been falling, and the snow was still wet. But what a splendid surface there would be when it froze! On the snow I saw some traces of sand left by the water. It was broad daylight; and through a rift in the clouds I saw a patch of blue sky. In the near distance, away below me, the three men were waiting for me in my little hotel by the seaside. I went to find Kristian, who abused me roundly for not having given him earlier warning.

I woke with a start, struck a match, and saw that the time was a quarter past four. It was pitch dark outside, and everyone was asleep. A feeble ray of light was cast by Paoda's oil lamp, which was burning on account of the baby. I peered through the window, but not a single object could I distinguish anywhere. The hut was pervaded by mingled smells of urine, ammonia, perspiration, and breath.

I slipped on a sealskin jacket which scratched my bare skin, and went outside with my hurricane lamp, a prey to hopes and fears. Bending double in order to do so, I opened the door of the entrance passage.

'Oh! damn!'

I was met full in the face by a gust of wind and snow,

the latter finding its way down my neck and wetting my skin as low as my waist. It might, however, only be a shower of the kind to which we had then grown accustomed; and I hastened to my hut. The window-shutter had completely disappeared beneath the snow which had been heaped up by the wind; and to reach the thermometer I had to plunge my arm up to the elbow into the snow. 28°. A bad prospect!

Then I listened. On the previous day there had been calm and silence everywhere; but to-day, in the mountain tops and on the high glaciers I could hear the rumbling and roaring of the wind. I consoled myself with the thought that this north-east wind, which might become a tempest, would at least sweep the snow from the ice-pack, level the surface, and make a better track. I returned shivering to the hut and woke Kristian.

'What sort of weather?' he asked me, with his head bending over backwards, beyond the edge of the platform.

'Not too bad down here. It's snowing, with a certain amount of wind. But it's warm, and away up in the mountains you can hear the wind blowing for all it's worth. What do you think?'

'You know as well as I do,' he replied.

'Come and see all the same.'

Kristian rose, pulled on his kamiks, and we went out. Kristian took some deep breaths, sniffed at the air, and listened carefully, shivering as he did so.

'We shall get the north-east wind. And it may snow too, it's quite warm enough for that. A bad look-out for the present. But it will come in useful later and will help our journey.'

'Well, then, what do you think? We had better wait, hadn't we?'

'Mmm,' he answered with a grunt. 'Yes, I suppose we shall have to wait.'

There we stood, the pair of us, shivering, unable to make up our minds to go indoors again and hoping against hope for some improvement in the weather.

'Let us go in and sleep,' I said. 'I haven't had much sleep myself. What about you?'

'Neither have I.'

We wedged the door carefully to keep the dogs out, and there, in the darkness of the hut, we spent a long, weary time pacing backwards and forwards, scratching ourselves, without the least desire to go to bed. We had but a single thought between us — that the last remaining seal had already been devoured.

Despite the snow which was falling thick and fast, I went out to shoot white partridges. A pair of these birds, with their black eyes surmounted by a half-circle of red, came and settled high up above, in the couloir where the avalanches fell. I was out for two hours before I secured them and brought them home. But in doing so I had lost my footing and had been carried down to a point just above the cliff, where I had succeeded in checking my downward flight by using the butt-end of my gun as an ice-axe. When I heard the snow collapsing above me in a continually increasing volume of sound, a curious, bitter taste came into my mouth.

Kristian was looking at the partridges which I had brought back.

'What an odd thing it is,' he said. 'Foxes are brown in summer and white in winter, and partridges just the same. It's like the earth — brown in summer and white with snow in winter.'

'Yes,' I said, 'it is strange. But there is an animal more extraordinary still, the one, I mean, that changes colour according to the place in which he may be.' And I proceeded to give my companions an account of the chameleon.

'Pititet,' my companions replied when I had finished, with an air which made it appear as though this were no strange thing to them.

'What is that?'

'It's like the bears; there are bears which, when they are pursued, transform themselves into some other animal. If they are in the sea, they dive and then come up again in the form of a narwhal or a seal. If they are on land, they hide behind a rock and reappear as a fox.'

'Yes, but those are bears like toupidek, whilst—'

'No, no, they're not like toupidek; they are bears, real bears, but they have in them the power of changing themselves. Some bears are like that.'

'Have you seen any?'

'We haven't ourselves, but my father saw one,' Odarpi said. 'There were several people hunting him. The bear disappeared behind a rock, and then on the other side, out came a fox, and they didn't see the bear any more.'

'Well, you people believe in these bears. But we Kratouna have never seen any bears like that.'

'Yes, but you will believe that too when we show you a bear's skin. Sometimes, under the loins, there is a sort of swelling between the skin and the flesh, and when you open it with a knife you find the fur of a white fox, or it may be a blue one, which smells of a fox. Now you know what a bear smells like, and it isn't in the least the same as a fox. But that fur has a more foxy smell than a fox himself has. Or there may sometimes be a narwhal's matak.'<sup>1</sup>

'Have you seen these little swellings?' I asked, in some surprise.

'Yes, we have,' they answered in chorus. 'The bear killed at Nigertussoq had one with a white fox's fur inside it,' Mikidi added.

'Have you really seen them?'

'Yes,' he replied, 'and so has Paoda.'

'And why didn't you tell me anything about it?' I said, feeling rather angry.

'You had gone off with your sleigh at the time when Paoda had it on the scraping board. But you'll see others.'

<sup>1</sup> Matak, i.e. a narwhal's skin.

Three days ago, when I believed that we should actually be starting off that night, I gave Gâba and Yosepi a box of cigarettes each. On the following day Gâba came to my hut, and almost before he had got through the door he said to me with a broad grin:

'They've put some of them aside.'

'What?'

'My box was full yesterday. To-day there are only seventeen left.'

'Who has been pinching them?'

'But they haven't been pinched. They have simply been put aside and hidden. And when I have none left they'll be given back to me, and then I shall have a new lot altogether.'

He seemed quite delighted.

To-day he came in again. He was smoking a cigarette with a look of profound disgust. The cigarette in question was so brown that its appearance was rather that of a cigar; it had been crushed, torn, wetted, soiled, and put entirely out of shape. He held it out to me with the tips of his fingers as though he were about to be sick, and exclaimed, with an emphasis which it would be impossible to describe:

'Ogui!'

For three days past Tada had been stationary. She had been lying on the platform, where she had resolutely remained. I asked Doumidia what was the matter with her.

'I don't know. It happens to her sometimes.'

Tipou was there also, and it was she who volunteered the real answer to my question.

'She hasn't got any drawers.'

I had only three shirts left, all of which were in a lamentable condition. The rest of them were adorning the bodies of Kristian, Doumidia, Kara, Yosepi, Gâba, Tipou, and Tada.

Of these three shirts, there were two which were not too

hopelessly decayed. One of them was in my bag of spare clothing which was packed in one of the cases for the sleigh, and could not possibly be taken out, for these cases were completely ready for our departure. The second one I intended to wear on the day of my departure for Tasis-saq. As for the third, I had been wearing it for a fortnight, and its condition had better not be described.

'Now you look like a real Eskimo,' my companions told me.

The gramophone was out of order. No sooner was it wound up than a strange noise proceeded from its interior which made it sound as though it were about to burst.

Mikidi was bending over it and taking it to pieces; and on the 'kitchen table' various boxes were gradually becoming filled with screws, bolts, and washers. Doumidia stood by to lend a hand in the work, her assistance being limited to the provision of the light afforded by an electric torch. Both she and Mikidi were perspiring and holding their breath. With his hands resting on the edge of the table on a level with his chin, Ogui stood on tiptoe and watched us, his eyes half starting from his head. He was completely naked.

Silence reigned. Timertsit, lying under my desk, sighed noisily.

All of a sudden, a sound of trickling was heard. Doumidia, Mikidi, and I looked above us. That sound could only come from the ceiling; but the ceiling was dry.

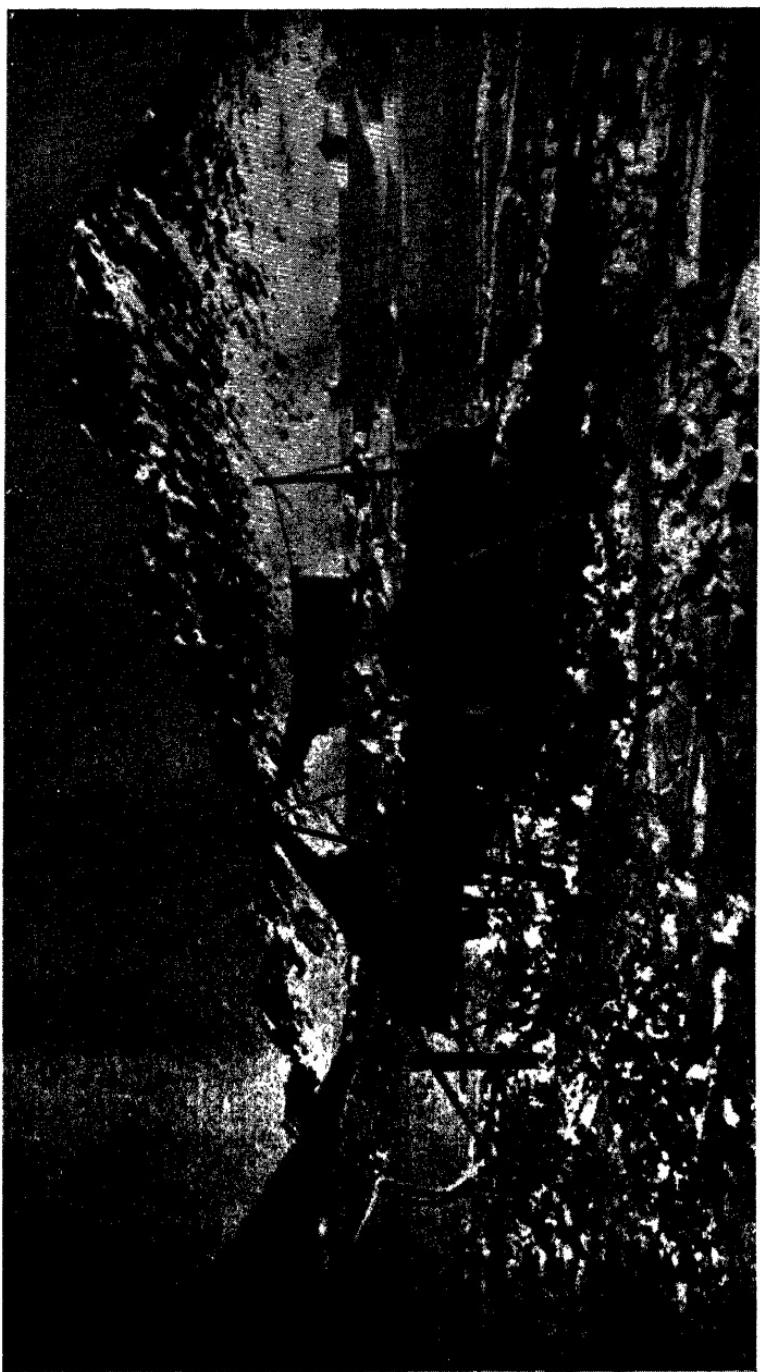
'Ogui, you've gone and forgotten yourself,' I said to him.  
'I! Oh, no!'

At this point the electric torch was requisitioned; and revealed, at Ogui's feet, an incriminating puddle.

'Ogui, you *have* forgotten yourself,' I said, laughing.  
'No, no, it wasn't me,' Ogui declared.

'It wasn't you? It wasn't you?' Mikidi cried, seizing the object which had caused the dispute. 'Well, then, what's that, I should like to know?' he added, showing Ogui the tip of a damp finger.

TWO BEAR SKINS HANGING TO DRY OVER TIE BOATS, BEYOND REACH OF THE DOGS





'No, no, it wasn't me,' Ogui protested once more.

We all laughed; and Mikidi, sniffing his finger, delivered himself of the following observation.

'It smells of urine.'

*Monday, 15th February, 1937.*

3 p.m. A further respite from the bad weather. Clouds gathered slowly from the north-west; this had not happened for two months past.

Kristian and I were weary of waiting, and decided to make a start on the following morning if the weather were not too bad. With our tent, primus stoves, and provisions, there would be no necessity to reach Sermiligaq in one day.

Kristian buckled up his packing-case which, with the supply of cans he was taking for the pastor and the three ovomaltine tins filled with beads which were to serve as payment for obtaining fresh dogs, was a considerable weight. With meticulous care he arranged in order every object which the sleigh would have to carry on the following day: sleeping-bag in reindeer skin, rucksack, a large sealskin intended as a present for the pastor, and a jacket in which he had rolled ten sealskins to be exchanged later at the trading centre.

In the meantime I cleared out my hut, my list of objects which I was to take with me disappearing little by little as I ticked off each item. The harness and traces were hanging from nails over my platform in the main hut, on which packing-cases, together with all the clothes which I should put on for my departure on the following day, were laid.

For the last time I made a distribution of rice, haricot beans, sugar, and flour. My stock of these was almost at an end. I also gave out food for the children of Kristian, whose company on all my expeditions I might now expect as a matter of course.

A short sweep round with a broom in my hut, and my work there was finished; and the little place did not look too hopelessly deserted. Doumidia turned round to me as we stood together at the door.

'When shall we be coming in here again?'

'Perhaps to-morrow if the weather is bad. Perhaps not for another two months.'

'Good-bye, good-bye, all of you,' she said as she turned about and faced each of the four corners of the room.

Then, with infinite gentleness, she laid the palm of her hand upon the reindeer skin with which my bench was covered, and softly stroked it.

'If you don't come back for two months, then for two months I shall be sad.'

'On my account, or on Kristian's?'

'I shall grieve for both of you. But for you, I shall be waiting every, every day.'

*Kangerdlugssuatsiaq, East  
Coast of Greenland (66° 14'*

*N.-35° 30' W.)*

*August 1936-August 1937.*

## APPENDIX

*Geographical Outline.*

*Preliminary Reports of the various Expeditions to Greenland,  
1934-5-6-7.*

*Plan of the Hut.*

*Notes on the Occupants of the Hut.*

*Diagram Showing Degrees of Relationship between the  
Occupants of the Hut.*

*Notes on the Dogs.*

*Glossary.*

*Map of the Angmagssalik Region.*

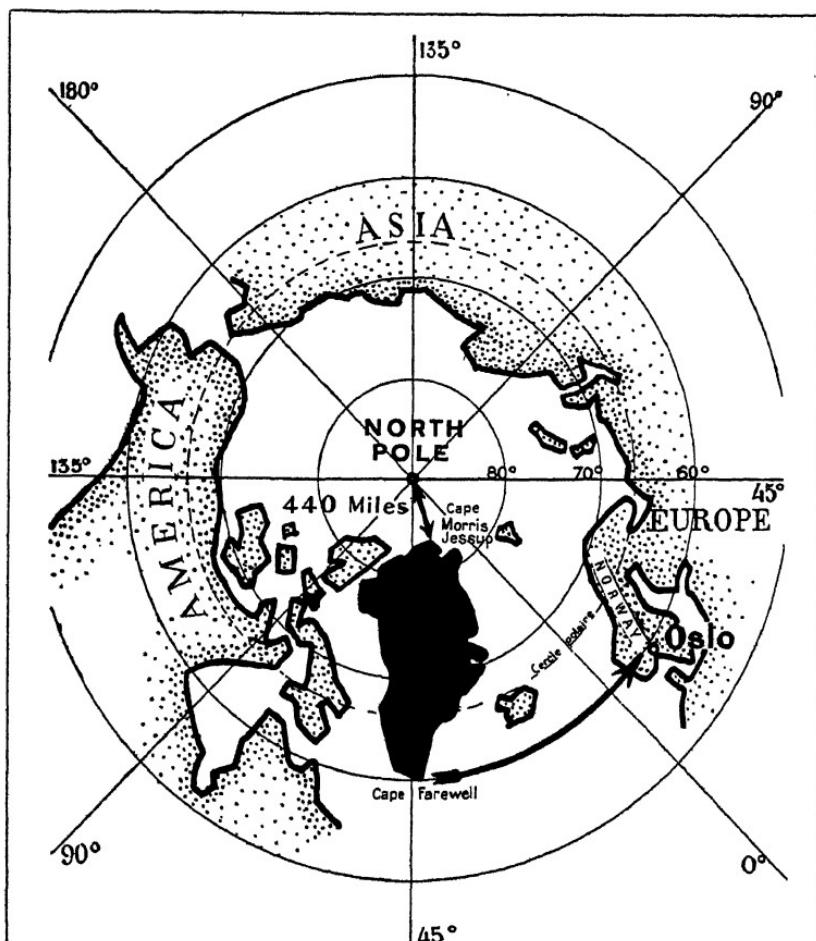
*Map of the Kangerdlugssuatsiaq Region (Winter 1936-7).*

*Note on the Eskimo language.*



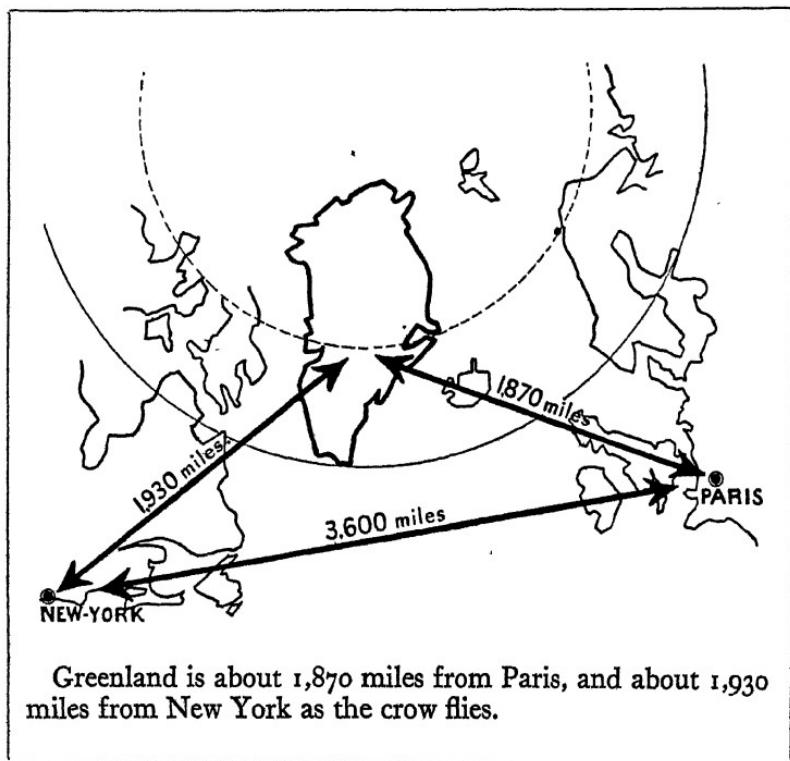
## APPENDIX

### GEOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE

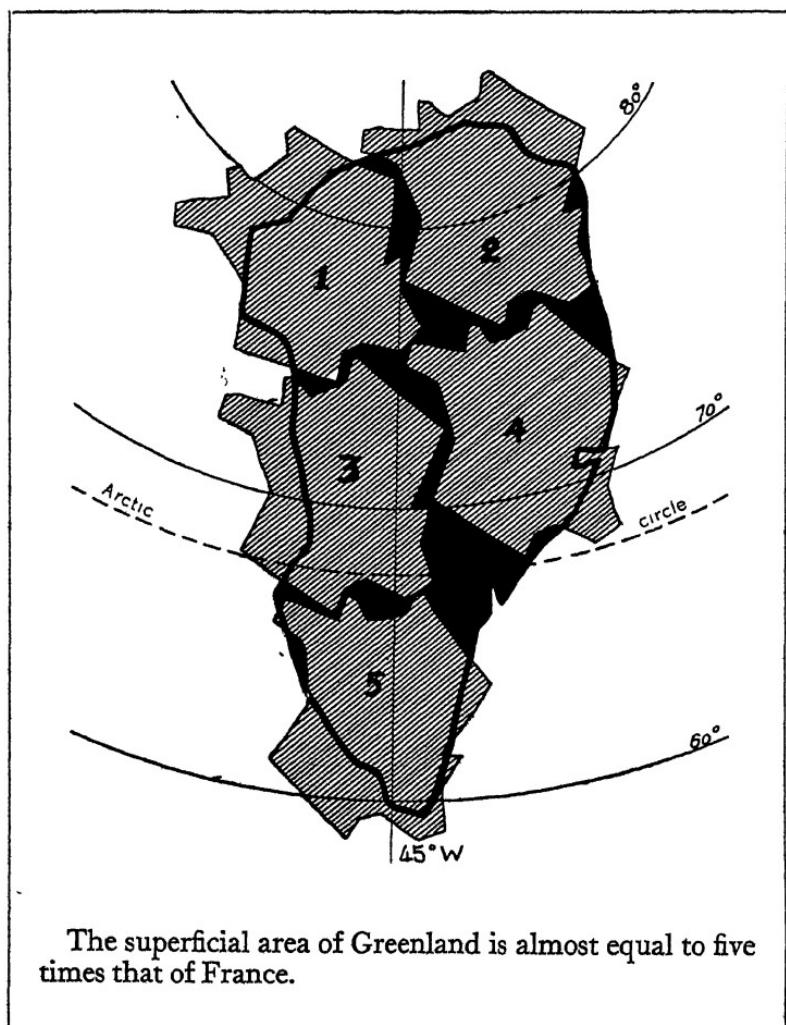


Greenland is the most northerly country in the world. Its northernmost point, Cape Morris Jessup, is only 440 miles from the Pole. Its most southerly point, Cape Farewell, is on the same latitude as Oslo, the capital of Norway. Greenland is the largest island in the world. It forms part of the Continent of America, geographically as well as geologically.

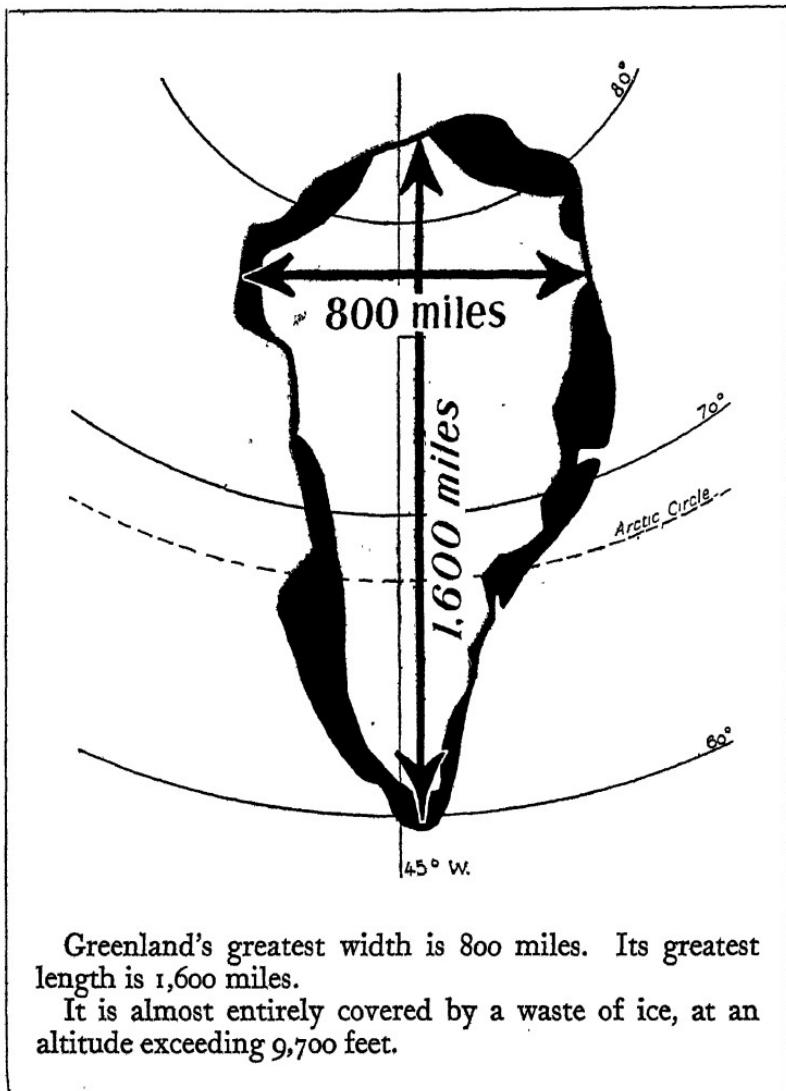








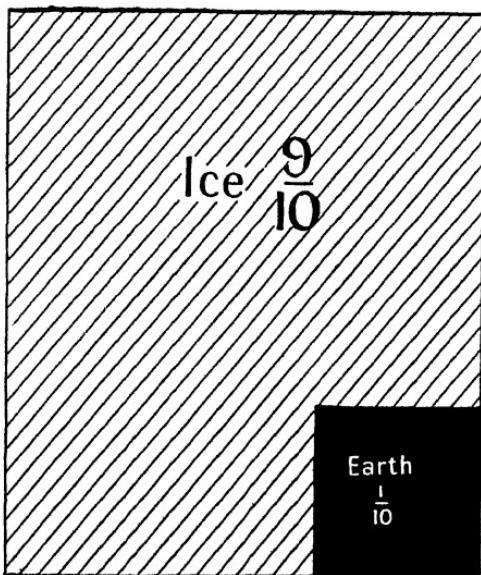




Greenland's greatest width is 800 miles. Its greatest length is 1,600 miles.

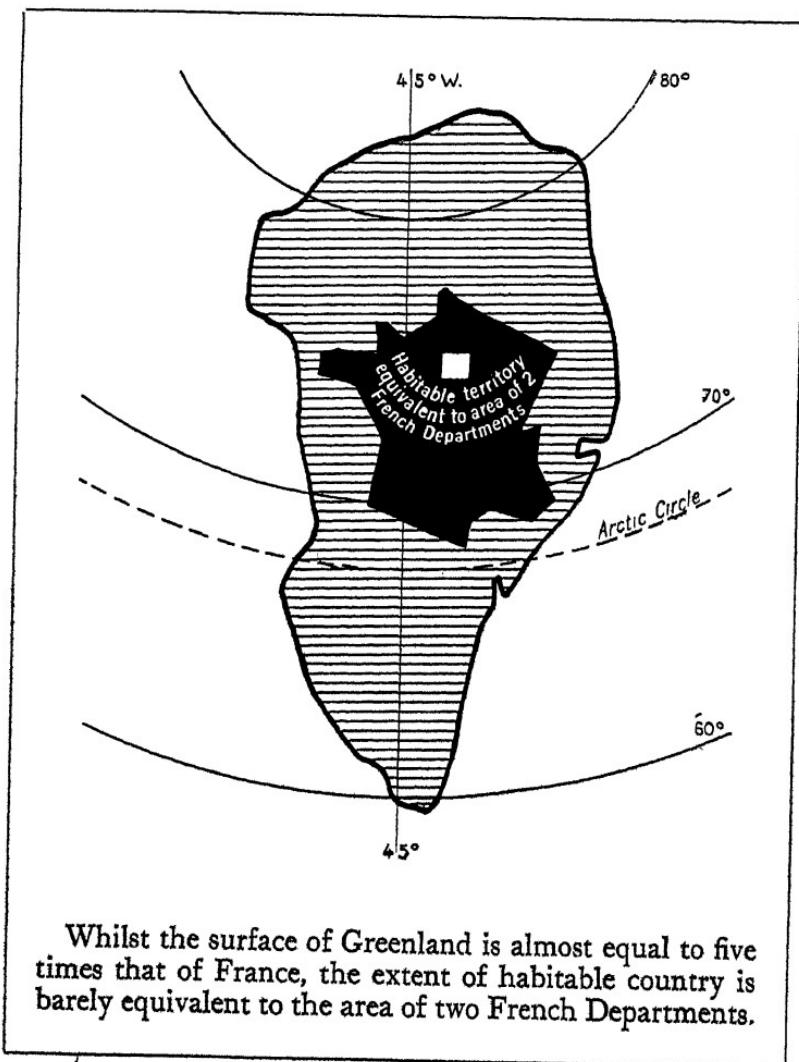
It is almost entirely covered by a waste of ice, at an altitude exceeding 9,700 feet.



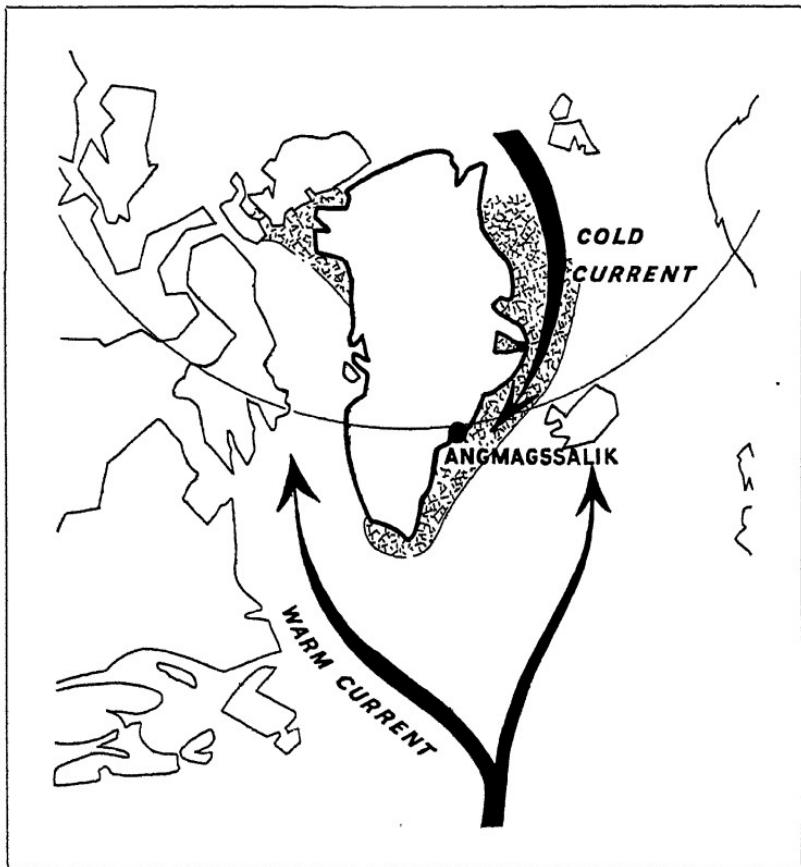


9/10ths of its area consists of ice. 1/10th only is of earth. The earth forms a borderland to the wastes of ice and consists of mountain ranges, Alpine in character, rising occasionally to a height of more than 10,500 feet, or of rounded rocks, worn by glaciers which have receded. These glaciers, which are in reality crumbling streams from the waste of ice, descend to sea-level.









The West coast of Greenland is washed by a warm current coming from the Atlantic.

The East coast is washed by a glacial current, carrying enormous ice-drifts and coming from the Arctic Ocean.

The result of this is three-fold:

1. *Ice.*—The West coast is ice-bound for two or three months only. During seven or eight months navigation there is easy and presents no danger.

The East coast is icebound (save in exceptional years) for eight to ten months of the year. During the few remaining months, navigation there is dangerous and can only be undertaken by specially constructed ships.

2. *Population.*—The West coast is populated by about

15,000 Eskimo. The East coast has only about 1,000 Eskimo inhabitants.

3. *Discovery.*—The West coast was discovered as early as the tenth century A.D. by the Viking Erik the Red.

On the East coast a landing was made for the first time by Scovby, and the Eskimo of Angmagssalik were not discovered until 1884, by Gustav Holm.

# EXPEDITION OF PAUL-EMILE VICTOR TO THE EAST COAST OF GREENLAND, 1936-7

## PRELIMINARY REPORT

### SUMMARY OF FORMER EXPEDITIONS

*French Expedition to the East coast of Greenland, 1934-5*

The members of this expedition were:

Paul-Emile Victor, ethnographer, leader of the expedition, specially commissioned.

Dr. Robert Gessain, anthropologist.

Michel Pérez, geologist.

Fred Matter-Steveniers, cinematograph operator.

The expedition sailed in the *Pourquoi Pas?* in August 1934, and wintered at Angmagssalik. It was brought home by the same ship in September 1935.

The results of this expedition were as follows:

Ethnographical investigations.

Records made of Eskimo music which were presented to the Musée de l'Homme, to the Musée de la Parole et du Geste, and to the National Museum of Copenhagen.

Ethnographical collection of more than 3,500 objects, presented to the Musée de l'Homme.

Census of the population.

Racial groups.

Metabolism.

Radiology.

Geological investigations, collections, etc.

A film was made; and about 800 photographs were taken, which in themselves constituted a wide and ample source of information on the subjects of ethnography, anthropology, and physical geography.

*Commission of 1936: French Trans-Greenland Expedition*

The members of this expedition were:

Dr. Robert Gessain, anthropologist, specially commissioned.

Michel Pérez, geologist, specially commissioned.

Paul-Emile Victor, specially commissioned.

Egil Knuth, a Danish subject.

The expedition started from Christianhaab (West coast of Greenland) in the middle of May 1936, crossed the Inlandsis, and arrived at Angmagssalik (East coast) on the 11th July, 1936.

On the 4th August the *Pourquoi Pas?* arrived at Angmagssalik.

On the 7th August Paul-Emile Victor embarked on this ship and sailed for Kangerdlugssuatsiak, the place selected for the winter sojourn.

On the 7th September R. Gessain and M. Pérez embarked on the *Gertrud-Rask* and returned to Europe.

The principal objects of the 1936 expedition were:

1. To make a study of the Inlandsis.

2. To utilise the summer at Angmassalik for the purpose of enabling R. Gessain and M. Pérez to complete and verify their researches of 1934-5, and P.-E. Victor to prepare for his winter sojourn of 1936-7 (Expedition of Paul-Emile Victor to the East coast of Greenland 1936-7).

The summary of this expedition is as follows:

Meteorological observations.

A cross-section of the surface of the Inlandsis covered during the journey.

New anthropological observations.

A film was made and numerous photographs taken.

#### REPORT OF THE 1936-7 EXPEDITION

(Paul-Emile Victor Expedition to the East coast of Greenland.)

The head of the expedition being thus on the spot and in possession of equipment and dogs, the expenses of the winter 1936-7 were reduced to a minimum.

Dr. Jean Charcot, as in the case of previous expeditions, gave the undersigned the benefit of his great experience in the Arctic, as well as the use of the *Pourquoi Pas?*

It was due to the kindness of the following that the undersigned was able to accomplish his winter sojourn under the best possible conditions:

The Danish Government.

The Styrelse of Greenland.

The Geodesic Institute of Copenhagen.

Danish explorers and experts.

He was appointed to the Expedition by the Minister of National Education, and received the help and support of the following:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ministry of Sport and Public Health.

Air Ministry.

Ministry of Marine.

The University of Paris.

The Ethnographical Museum of the Trocadéro, and particularly its Director, Dr. Paul Rivet, Lecturer at the Museum, and his sub-Director M. Georges-Henri Rivière.

The National Meteorological Office.

The National Bureau of Scientific Research.

The Geographical Society.

The Museum of Languages and Customs.

Numerous industrialists and friends, in particular Comte G. Micard.

The Expedition of 1936-7 - as were those of 1934-5 and 1936 - was an entirely private enterprise.

As in the case of the previous expeditions, the necessary funds were provided by official grants and private donations; but their principal source was derived from money earned personally by lectures, and articles and reviews in the newspapers. The head of the Expedition received no remuneration of any kind.

#### *Aims and origin of the Expedition of 1936-7*

The main objects of the Expedition of 1936-7 were the completion and verification of certain investigations made in 1934 and 1935, and the making of new ones.

It had not been possible, on the return of the Expedition of 1934-5, to publish the results of certain observations taken during the course of that first winter sojourn. The liquidation of the liabilities incurred by the French Expedition to the East coast of Greenland in 1934 and 1935, and the preparations for the French Trans-Greenland Expedition of 1936, occupied the whole of the period between the return of the first in September 1935 and the departure of the second in April 1936.

The postponement of the work of publication until the return from the winter sojourn of 1936-7 was therefore intentional. It was, in fact, of the greatest importance to continue with the least possible delay the ethnographical study of the Eskimo tribe at Angmagssalik. The evidences of ancient culture in this district were on the point of disappearing altogether; and the apprehension which was felt in this matter proved to be only too well founded since, in the course of the winter during which preparations were being made for the crossing of the Inlandsis, an epidemic carried off 8 per cent of the population, the most numerous victims being old men, the most valuable source of information.

Whilst the winter sojourn of 1934-5 had been made in a house kindly lent by the Danish Government, and situated in the very centre of the colony, in close proximity to the Governor, the clergyman, the sanatorium, the wireless station, the post office, and the trading centre, the winter of 1936-7 was spent in an isolated Eskimo hut. There the head of the expedition lived as one of the family, and thus enjoyed the most favourable conditions for ethnographical research.

#### *Report*

Having arrived at Angmagssalik on the 11th July, 1936, the undersigned went on board the *Pourquoi Pas?* on the 7th August, accompanied by the Eskimo family with which he was to spend the winter, and disembarked on the 9th August at Kangerdlugssuatsiaq, the place which since 1935 had been chosen for the winter stay ( $66^{\circ}14' N.$  -  $35^{\circ}30' W.$ ; situated about 60 miles from any other dwellings and about 120 miles from the wireless station).

The stores shipped from France were unloaded on the same day, and on the 10th August the *Pourquoi Pas?* left Kangerdlugssuatsiaq.

The months of August and September were spent in tents or under the ouniak with the Eskimo family, accompanying them on their various hunting and fishing expeditions. At the end of September the Eskimo hut was built (stones and earth) for the winter season. Another little hut was built, Eskimo fashion, as a shelter for provisions and stores.

A hut of about 7 feet square had been ordered in France as a workshop for the protection of documents, papers, clothes, etc. It reached Angmagssalik by the Danish revictualling boat, but could not be sent on to Kangerdlugssuatsiaq. After a period spent in waiting until the beginning of October, a hut was built, with such materials as were available, behind and adjoining the Eskimo hut. Towards mid-October life in tents was finally abandoned, and we installed ourselves in the hut.

The position of the undersigned was on the 'window platform'. As one amongst the twenty-six occupants of the hut, he lived there practically the whole year, effecting innumerable fresh ethnographical investigations and, thanks to these exceptional conditions, observing many unrecorded customs. The head of the Expedition had learnt to speak the language with some fluency during the winter of 1934-5, as well as during his stay on the West coast of Greenland. He spent a whole year speaking practically no language but Eskimo, and his knowledge of the tongue greatly facilitated his ethnographical studies.

During February and March 1937 the first sleigh journey to the South was made. The objects of this journey were:

To pay visits of investigation to the various groups of Eskimo distributed along the coast, and

To reach the wireless station in order to obtain any telegrams that might have arrived and to send replies to these.

From April to May the second sleigh journey to the South was made. The objects of this second journey were to continue investigations and to visit the various inhabited settlements. On his return from this journey the undersigned was suffering from scurvy and was laid up for twelve days in hospital at Angmagssalik.

At the beginning of June 1937, journeys of exploration were carried out with sledges across the unknown mountainous region in the hinterland of Angmagssalik (southernmost portion of the Land of King Christian IX, Schweizer Land). On

the 6th June the undersigned reached, across this region, the foot of Mount Forel.

All these journeys were carried out with two sleighs, the undersigned being accompanied by the Eskimo, Kristian.

The total distance covered by these journeys, for ethnographical investigation or for exploration, represented about 1,250 miles with sleighs.

On the 16th June, 1937, the ice broke up.

On the 17th June, the hut was left for good, and a nomad life was resumed, either in tents or under the umiak, making various journeys for hunting or fishing.

On the 17th August, 1937, the undersigned, thanks to the generosity of Comte G. Micard, was enabled to embark in the *Quest* and return to Europe.

#### RESULTS

The value of the results achieved can for the present be estimated on a numerical basis only. Their scientific value must be left to the judgment of the competent authorities.

#### *Record of the Ethnographical Work carried out by the Expedition of 1934-5*

*Collection of ethnographical objects numbering nearly 3,500, both antique and modern types, including:*

Oumiaks: 2.

Kayaks: 3.

Tents: 3.

Sleighs: 3.

Articles of wearing apparel: over 200.

Harpoons: about 35.

Accessories for hunting, fishing, etc.: about 650.

Tools: 50.

Cooking and household accessories: about 250.

Masks: 100, etc.

This collection has been presented to the Ethnographical Museum of the Trocadéro (*Musée de l'Homme*).

*Records of Eskimo music.* About 60 records (10 inch) recorded on both sides and totalling about 250 songs.

Donations from this collection of records have been made to the Ethnographical Museum of the Trocadéro (*Musée de*

l'Homme) and to the Musée de la Parole et du Geste at the National Museum Copenhagen.

*Investigations.*

About 800 different songs and poems transcribed phonetically.

Various nomenclatures and vocabularies.

Religious customs.

Various measurements, etc.

*Scientific Work carried out by the Expedition of 1936-7*

*Ethnographical Investigations.*

*Hunting.* Methods of hunting, ownership, priority, etc.

*Utilisation.* Food supplies, skins, bones, etc.

*Foodstuffs.* Origins (about 75 different).

Preparation (about 75 different methods for the seal alone).

Preservation.

Consumption.

*Technique of working.* Skins, bones, wood, iron.

*Positions during work* – of the hands and of the body.

*Positions during rest.* Sleep (100 sketches).

*Games of children and adults.* String games (complete collection, numbering 29. For each game there is a sketch and explanation of each movement).

*Acinarata.* (Flying trapeze.)

*Puidinganek.* (Miming with the fingers).

*Magitat.* (Knuckle bone marionettes).

*Ayangak.* (Cup and ball).

*Wrestling, etc.*

*Umiak.* Manufacture, assemblage, working of skins, etc.

*Kayak.* idem. In particular: oratarnek ('rolling'). Total of types collected numbers about 40. The technique of rolling has been noted in detail for each type, with sketches, photographs, and explanations of each movement.

*Conception of ownership,*

*Right of succession,*

*Sorcery and magic; religious practices.*

*Stories.* More than 200 stories were collected, the whole forming a kind of history of the tribe going back for more than a century and a half.

*Ethnographical collection.* A collection of ethnographical objects which had been ordered in 1935, was made in the summer of 1936 and dispatched by the *Pourquoi Pas?*

*Anthropology.* A collection of human skulls and bones was made.

*Physical geography.* Exploration of the unknown mountainous region lying in the hinterland of Angmagssalik (Schweizer Land; southern district of the Land of King Christian IX) from the coast to the Inlandsis, i.e., for about 90 miles a district approximately bounded by 66°05' N. to 67°00' N. and 35°30' W. to 37°30' W.

350 photographs were taken and many sketches made.

#### *Records.*

*Photographs.* About 2,000 photographs were taken, of which a very large number were specifically ethnographical.

*Drawings and sketches.* These were equally numerous.

*Journal of the route.* A journal of the route, in which were noted daily events and observations, various ethnographical facts, narrated anecdotes, etc., was kept regularly each day, and consists of more than 900 pages.

In addition to this, two Eskimo informers kept a regular journal of the various activities of native life in the hut or in the tent, whilst hunting or on the move.

The undersigned hopes it will be recognised that he did his best to make the most of his opportunities during the year spent with the Eskimo at Angmagssalik. He wishes that he could have achieved more.

I cannot conclude this Report without saying, once again, that the organisation of the three expeditions in Greenland which were made during the course of three years was carried out in each instance with the assistance of Dr. Jean Charcot. Dr. Charcot was invariably, both for my comrades and myself, the kindest of chiefs, the most reliable of counsellors, and the most devoted of friends. Ever ready to help, smiling through difficulties, tireless in his affection, he was also prepared to restrain our too youthful enthusiasms and, when necessary, to restore our drooping spirits.

Since that day at the end of February 1937, when for the first time for seven months I met some men whom I had not seen before, who told me that 'the French ship had sunk and that all were dead', not a day has passed without my thinking of my lost friends and of him for whom I feel such profound affection, and to whom I owe such deep gratitude.

*Reykiavik (Iceland),  
24th August, 1937.*

*Paris, 26th September, 1937.*

*All correspondence to be addressed to:*

M. Paul-Emile Victor,  
Musée de l'Homme,  
Palais du Trocadéro,  
Paris.

## PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE FRENCH TRANS-GREENLAND EXPEDITION, 1936

The French Trans-Greenland Expedition (E.F.T.) was decided upon in the autumn of 1935 after the return of the French Expedition to the East coast of Greenland (E.F.G.).

It was a scientific expedition undertaken with the sole aim of allowing three members of the E.F.G. to complete their studies and observations accumulated during the winter of 1934-5.

These two expeditions, that of 1934-5 and that of 1936, must be considered as one and the same vast undertaking, accomplished in two parts. The intermediate sojourn in Europe served a purpose: on the one hand to achieve greater precision in the methods of verifying certain work effected in Greenland in 1934-5, and on the other, to draw up a new programme of research, based on a preliminary scrutiny of the results already achieved.

### HOW THE EXPEDITION WAS COMPOSED

The French Trans-Greenland Expedition was composed of three of the members of the preceding expedition: Dr. Robert Gessain, anthropologist; Michel Pérez, geologist; and Paul-Emile Victor, ethnographer.

An unusual feature in expeditions of this nature deserves to be stressed. With the agreement of all three members, it was clearly understood by each that this expedition should have no leader, and, as it turned out, their collaboration proved to be thoroughly effective; responsibilities were distributed according to the functions of each individual, and no decision was made by one alone. The harmony was always perfect.

It was only when the expedition was at the point of departure that the three members welcomed with pleasure the offer of their friend, Egil Knuth, to participate.

## OBJECT OF THE EXPEDITION

The object of the Expedition was first of all to spend two months of the summer at Angmagssalik in order to complete the scientific observations taken during the winter of 1934-5.

Owing to the ice-belt it is only possible for ships to obtain access to the East coast of Greenland for a very limited period, generally in the month of August. The Expedition wished to reach Angmagssalik as early as possible in the summer season, before the ice-belt rendered the approach of a ship impossible. To cross Greenland from West to East was not in itself an objective, but was the only means by which to accomplish a stay of at least two months, a period which was necessary and at the same time sufficient for the completion of certain work undertaken during the preceding winter in the district of Angmagssalik. Thus this cross-country journey was a means and not an end.

Dr. Robert Gessain wished to complete his studies of the Eskimo race, and Michel Pérez his studies of physical geography; but neither of them wished again to spend a year in Greenland, since they judged that two months would be sufficient for the completion of their work, and that the winter would be better spent in a laboratory in an examination of their collection of documents and observations, as well as publications. For Robert Gessain and Michel Pérez, therefore, the crossing of Greenland was a matter of necessity.

Paul-Emile Victor and Eigil Knuth wished to spend the winter in Greenland, P.-E. Victor in order to continue his ethnographical investigations, and Eigil Knuth with an artistic object (sculpture and painting). The cross-country journey was for them an advantage, as it gave them more time in which to make preparations for their wintering.

## SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME OF THE JOURNEY ACROSS COUNTRY

Although the cross-country journey was in itself but a means to an end, it seemed only reasonable to make the most of it, and a scientific programme was accordingly drawn up.

1. During the journey, scientific observations to be taken.
2. This cross-country journey would give an opportunity for sinking the first surveying rods in order to make a boring of

the substratum of the Inlandsis, the nature of which had not yet been determined.

3. To cross the still unexplored coastal mountain ranges which border the district of Angmagssalik, with a view to making observations of a geological nature.

During the winter, while still busy with preparations, we learned that the Eskimo population of Angmagssalik was in the throes of an epidemic. The members of the Expedition took with them specially prepared medicines for the use of the natives.

#### ASSISTANCE GIVEN

Dr. Charcot not only gave his moral support to the Expedition; the latter also received the benefit of his great experience in Arctic matters, with the material assistance afforded by his ship, the *Pourquoi Pas?*

The Danish Government and the Styrelse of Greenland displayed the greatest interest in the Expedition, and without their good offices the scheme could never have materialised.

The Expedition received very great assistance and obtained important subsidies from:

- The Ministry of National Education.
- The Ministry of Sport and Public Health.
- The University of Paris.
- The National Bureau of Scientific Research.
- The Geographical Society of Geneva.
- The Geographical Society of Paris.

In addition to this, several official organisations contributed to the success of the Expedition by the loan of scientific instruments:

- The Styrelse of Greenland.
- The Danish Institute of Land Measurement.
- The Air Ministry.
- The Ministry of Marine.
- The Anthropological Laboratory of the Museum.
- The National Meteorological Office.

The official subsidies, although considerable, were insufficient; these, however, were supplemented by private gifts which

constituted a highly important contribution towards the total expenses of the Expedition. Finally, the French and Swiss industrialists showed great generosity, and by gifts and loans contributed largely to the carrying out of the Expedition. The heavy amount of practical work involved in making rapid preparations for this Expedition could never have been achieved without the ever-ready help of a large number of friends.

### ORGANISATION

The payment of the debts of the E.F.G. and the preparations for the E.F.T. occupied the whole of the interval between the return of the E.F.G. in September 1935, and the departure of the E.F.T. in April 1936; and it was thus impossible to publish the results of certain observations which had been taken during the winter of 1934-5. All those with knowledge of the facts were well aware that this work would have to be postponed to the winter of 1936. It was, in fact, of the greatest importance to continue ethnographical observations of the Angmagssalik tribe at the earliest moment possible, for the witnesses of the ancient culture were on the point of disappearing. These fears were well-founded, since, during the course of the winter when preparations for the crossing were made, 8 per cent of the population succumbed to an epidemic; and the victims were principally old people, the most valuable source of information.

The work of organisation was allotted as follows:

Dr. Robert Gessain was put in charge of the provisioning and, generally, of matters affecting the health of the expedition. He revised his anthropological documents; he drew up his programme of work for the summer, and put the finishing touches to arrangements for fresh research.

Michel Pérez was in charge of the organisation of stores and equipment. He planned the itinerary of the journey and got in touch with the Danish authorities. He took the questions of navigation in hand, and worked out the programme of scientific observations to be taken during the journey.

Paul-Emile Victor was in charge of the financial side and of propaganda. He dealt with the official subsidies, collected the funds, and was responsible for the majority of the lectures, and articles in the Press.

Egil Knuth, by his Danish nationality and residence in Den-

mark, made dealings easier with the authorities of that country. He helped, too, with the organisation in every way he could.

Until January, it was uncertain whether the Expedition would be able to raise the necessary funds. From that time onwards preparations were pushed forward with all possible speed. All the equipment (sleighs, tents, clothing) was then carefully studied, put in hand, and specially constructed or prepared.

Thanks to the kindness of the Director of the Styrelse of Greenland, Mr. Daugaard-Jensen, all instructions were telegraphed to Greenland. The Governor of the colony of Christianhaab, Mr. Dan Moller, went in person to explore the approach to the Inlandsis, which had been mapped out in Paris. This same Governor at the request of the E.F.T. made arrangements for a depot of 3,300 pounds' weight of dried fish on the border of the Inlandsis itself. Teams of dogs were ordered by wireless.

When careful preparations have been made by people with some knowledge and experience of the conditions of Arctic life, the results of such an adventure as a crossing of Greenland need no longer be attended by uncertainty.

#### DEPARTURE FROM EUROPE

The departure was made in two groups. The first group, consisting of P.-E. Victor and E. Knuth, had to deposit the whole of the equipment on the border of the Inlandsis at a point which had been decided on beforehand. During this time Gessain and Pérez put the finishing touches to the arrangements for scientific research during the summer.

P.-E. Victor and E. Knuth left Copenhagen on the 7th April on board the *Hans Egede*, the first vessel that year to sail for Northern Greenland.

R. Gessain and M. Pérez left Copenhagen on the 25th April in the *Gertrud-Rask*, with Jacobshavn as their destination. The two groups met at Jacobshavn on the 17th May.

#### PRELIMINARY RECONNAISSANCE

With the help of ten Eskimo and their sleighs, Victor and Knuth reconnoitred the approach to the Inlandsis by the littoral glaciers, marked out the route they had taken, and then deposited 24 cwt. of equipment to be used on the journey. This depot, at an altitude of 2,000 feet, was called 'The Camp

of the Black Flag'. It was  $68^{\circ}25'$  latitude North and  $50^{\circ}05'$  longitude West. This was the point of departure for the crossing.

Thanks to excellent snow conditions, Victor and Knuth carried out this first stage of the crossing successfully in five days.

### THE CROSSING OF THE INLANDSIS

On the 17th May the four members of the E.F.T. met at Jacobshavn, and immediately embarked in a motor-boat for Aukugdlit. With the help of six Eskimo and their dog-sleighs, the Expedition got up to the Camp of the Black Flag in three days, in spite of serious difficulties due to the thaw.

On the 23rd May the Eskimo returned to the coast, and from that date onwards the Expedition had to rely entirely on its own strength. The convoy consisted of three Nansen sleighs with 33 dogs. The total load on setting out was made up as follows:

- Seven weeks' rations for four men;
- Seven weeks' rations for the dogs;
- Cinematographic and photographic apparatus;
- Navigating and meteorological instruments (wireless transmitter for hourly signals, theodolite, sextant, chronometers, etc.);
- One collapsible canoe.

From the 27th May to the 3rd June weather conditions were extremely variable, and allowed of reasonable but not good progress. From the 4th to the 24th June, progress had to be made under deplorable weather conditions. Snow fell practically without interruption, which is rare in Greenland at this time of year. There were violent snow-squalls, which were rendered all the more trying by the fact of our having to march against the wind. These conditions were a great strain on the dogs, and twelve of them had to be killed. These bad conditions made some modification of the route necessary; after Camp 13, on the 16th June, the Expedition marched direct on Fjord Base, and abandoned a portion of the food and surplus equipment. From that day onwards, rations were reduced. On the 25th June, on the nineteenth stage of the journey, at  $66^{\circ}58'$  lat. N. and  $41^{\circ}35'$  long. W., weather conditions

improved, and in seven stages the Expedition reached the Eastern coast at Fjord Base on the 5th July.

To sum up, the actual crossing of the Inlandsis occupied forty-five days. The march began on the 26th May and the crossing was completed on the 5th July. The distance of 420 miles was covered in twenty-seven stages. Taking into account the double journeys which the bad conditions rendered necessary, the distance covered amounted to about 512 miles, or an average of 19 miles per stage. During the forty-five days of the crossing there were:

- 16 days when the nebulosity was 10.
- 5 days when it was nil.
- 20 days with precipitation, snow or rain.
- 8 days when the wind blew 50 feet per second.
- 4 days without wind.

A contrary wind blew, i.e., from the south-east, for twenty-eight days.

The minimum registered temperature was 17° below zero; for twelve days the temperature remained below 14°.

The maximum altitude reached was about 8,800 feet; but the exact figure cannot be stated until later.

The members of the Expedition reached the coast in excellent physical condition, within the time anticipated and at the place intended. They found on the Eastern coast at Fjord Base the depot of provisions ordered five months previously by wireless, which had been carefully prepared by Mr. Jensen, the Governor of Angmagssalik.

The members of the Expedition were conveyed by Eskimo to the Danish colony at Tasiusak, where they arrived on the 11th July.

#### SUMMER AT ANGMAGSSALIK

The summer of 1936 had a surprise in store for Eastern Greenland. At the beginning of July the ice-belt completely disappeared on the Eastern coast as far as about 72° latitude North.

Such an event had not occurred within the memory of man, and navigation became as easy as in the open seas. For the first time in the annals of Angmagssalik, the district was visited by six boats during the same summer.

## CONDITION OF THE TRIBE

The winter epidemic had worked great ravages among the tribe. Since the spring, relief had been distributed by the Danish Governor, and the survivors showed every sign of excellent health. The epidemic, however, was not checked, and five natives fell victims during the summer.

## WORK DURING THE SUMMER

Dr. Robert Gessain visited numerous settlements and completed certain researches left incomplete in 1934-5, which included the following subjects.

Anthropometry.

Classification by blood tests.

Research in genealogy (in order to establish a genealogical basis for his investigations).

He also carried out certain new researches.

Michel Pérez continued his geological work, which was greatly facilitated by the admirable geographical maps of the Angmagssalik district which had just been completed by the Geodesic Institute of Denmark, and placed at the disposal of the Expedition by that Institute.

Geological observations were taken at the south-west end of the Sermilik Fjord, which had never previously been visited, though various attempts to do so had already been made.

Paul-Emile Victor made preparations for his winter sojourn.

On the 4th August the *Pourquoi Pas?* arrived at Tasiusak and unloaded a consignment of scientific instruments to be used for the work to be undertaken by Gessain and Pérez during the summer. The ship then took on board 15 Eskimo, the stores required for the winter by Paule-Emile Victor and 15 natives (tents, umiaks, sleighs, provisions), and about 30 dogs. The *Pourquoi Pas?* then got under way for her journey to Kangerdlugssuatsiaq, where Paul-Emile Victor was to spend the winter, forty-eight hours after her arrival at Tasiusak.

Gessain and Pérez continued their work and proceeded to make use of the instruments which the *Pourquoi Pas?* had brought them. On the 7th September they embarked in the *Gertrud-Rask* which was proceeding direct to Copenhagen.

On the evening of the 16th September, when the *Gertrud Rask* was in sight of Denmark, they received the news of the loss of the *Pourquoi Pas?*

On the 18th September they arrived at Copenhagen, which they left by the first boat going to Iceland.

At the instance of Commander Marzin, commanding officer of the destroyer *l'Audacieux*, the Minister of Marine gave Gessain and Pérez a passage on board this ship for their return from Iceland to France.

#### SCIENTIFIC WORK AND DOCUMENTS BROUGHT BACK

After its crossing of the Inlandsis the Expedition brought back (1) Meteorological observations and (2) a cross-section of the surface of the route taken.

The following is a summary of the work carried out by Dr. R. Gessain:

A complete anthropometrical survey of the tribe.

Treatises on growth and puberty.

Genealogical investigations to facilitate a study of heredity in character.

Demography.

Dental impressions.

Manual impressions.

A complete collection of anthropological photographs.

Answers to a psychoanalytical questionnaire.

Investigation of native obstetrics.

A certain number of skulls collected during that year were lost with the *Pourquoi Pas?*.

(No mention is made here of the investigations carried out in 1934-5, e.g. in metabolism, radiology, blood sedimentation, etc.)

The work carried out by Michel Pérez included (1) Geological observations in the Angmagssalik district, and (2) Collections of ethnographical objects (partially lost with the *Pourquoi Pas?*).

The Expedition also made a cinematograph film during its crossing of Greenland. This film was partially lost with the *Pourquoi Pas?*.

The scientific aims with which the Expedition set out were

fulfilled in every respect, with the two following exceptions. The fixing of the highest point of the Inlandsis, and the crossing of the coastal mountain ranges with a view to geological study, were frustrated by bad atmospheric conditions. These tasks will constitute two items in the programme of some future Expedition.

The examination of the documents will show whether the results obtained are worthy of the confidence in the members of the Expedition which has been so freely bestowed on them. They trust that the competent authorities will come to the conclusion that their efforts, during these Expeditions to Greenland in 1934-5-6, were not unworthy.

*Paris, November 1936.*

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE FRENCH  
SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION TO THE EAST COAST OF  
GREENLAND (1934-5)

*Sent by the Ethnographical Museum of the Trocadéro, Paris  
(National Museum of Natural History).*

SUMMARY

The objects of this Expedition were essentially of an ethnographical and anthropological order; but this did not preclude other work in the realm of geography and geology, which was also undertaken.

The members of the Expedition were as follows:

Paul-Emile Victor, ethnographer, leader of the Expedition, and in charge of the ethnographical side.

Dr. Robert Gessain, doctor of medicine, in charge of the anthropological side.

Michel Pérez, geologist, in charge of geography and geology.

Fred Matter-Steveniers, in charge of cinematographic and photographic work.

The pecuniary resources of the Expedition were distinctly limited, consisting principally of a subsidy from the Ministry of National Education, a few gifts, and personal sacrifices made by the members of the mission, who, moreover, received no remuneration whatever. This dearth of funds was partly compensated by the co-operation of the *Pourquoi Pas?*, the assistance afforded by the Navy, and the help so generously given by the Government, by Danish explorers and men of science, and also by French manufacturers, a list of whose names might well be published.

The Expedition sailed in the *Pourquoi Pas?*, which left Saint-Servan on the 11th July, 1934.

After a brief call at Akureyri (Iceland), where certain objects were acquired, a stay of three days at the settlement at

Scoresby Sound gave the Expedition an opportunity of beginning its work with a little research, which consisted of measurements and blood tests.

On the 25th August, the Expedition disembarked with its stores at Angmagssalik, and its installation in a house lent by the Danish Government was greatly facilitated by the crew of the *Pourquoi Pas?*. On the 31st August this ship left Greenland and returned to France.

In the early part of September the English explorer Martin Lindsay arrived at Angmagssalik after his crossing of the Ice Cape. He gave the Expedition the pack of dogs which he still had left: and he took it upon himself to lend them the instruments provided by the Royal Geographical Society of London, which was so kind as to notify its endorsement of this act of international good fellowship.

At the commencement of September the four members of the Expedition started off in boats on visits to the principal settlements, in order to establish a preliminary contact with the natives.

From the 10th October onwards owing to climatic conditions which in any case were normal and quite foreseen, the Expedition was unable to move from its base camp at Angmagssalik until January: there was too much ice to permit of journeys by boat, and not enough ice and snow to allow of sleigh journeys.

This period was utilised for the following purposes:

1. Installation of electrical apparatus, X-ray apparatus, apparatus for recording sounds on discs, searchlights for photography, etc., carried by Michel Pérez.

2. The collection of detailed information regarding the natives of other settlements who came to the trading centre to replenish their stores. These people very soon acquired the habit of allowing themselves to be lodged and fed at the base camp.

From February to June, the time was occupied in obtaining general information, taking observations, and making collections.

From June to August there were boat expeditions for similar purposes.

During the course of all these journeys the members of the

Expedition learned to adapt themselves completely and in every respect to the native mode of life, sharing their food, lodging, and means of transport.

The twenty-two inhabited settlements were visited without a single exception, and the 875 inhabitants measured, examined, and interrogated.

The distances covered in the course of this work were about 1,250 miles by sleigh and 750 miles by boat.

The region traversed was that which lies between  $65^{\circ}25'$  and  $66^{\circ}30'$  N.,  $34^{\circ}25'$  and  $39^{\circ}40'$  W.

The four members of the Expedition quickly learned to speak the language of the country, and were thus able to converse fluently with the natives.

Kayaks were built for them, which they utilised for short journeys.

The following is a summary of the work carried out:

Ethnographical collections (3,500 objects).

Song records (about 250 songs on 60 discs).

Ethnographical investigations.

Anthropological, physiological, and pathological research (about 820 measurements of individuals, 500 blood tests, 290 blood sedimentations, etc.).

Memoranda and notes on geography, geology, meteorology, etc.

Mapmaking, exploration.

An ethnographical film.

Photographs. (About 8,000 photographs, plates and films, developed at the base camp.)

On the 18th August, 1935, the *Pourquoi Pas?* arrived at Angmagssalik to fetch the Expedition. During the time occupied by the crew in taking the stores and collections on board, the members of the Expedition completed their work by the taking of observations, this work being rendered possible owing to the resources afforded by the ship, and to an additional supply of stores which had been demanded by wireless during the winter.

The departure finally took place on the 25th August, 1935, with Reykiavik (Iceland) as the first port of call, where certain classifications by blood tests were carried out.

During these twelve months spent on the East coast of Green-

land, the four members of the Expedition worked together in perfect harmony. The excellent relations maintained with the Danish officials and with the natives were a contributory factor in the attainment of the objects in view. The examination of the collections and analysis of the observations taken will show whether the results obtained are worthy of the confidence which has been so freely placed in them; and the members of the Expedition are prepared to await any estimate or opinion which, as a result of such investigation, may then be formed. Whilst they are fully conscious that much work remains to be done which they were unable to carry out in the limited time at their disposal, they hope that the competent authorities will give them credit for having done their best.

*Reykjavik (Iceland), September 1935.*

## SUMMARY OF ETHNOGRAPHICAL WORK

(carried out by Paul-Emile Victor, in charge of this section)

*Collections* (P.-E. Victor, with contributions from the other members): more than 3,300 specimens, both of ancient and present day pattern, roughly divided as follows:

Umiaks: 2;  
Kayaks: 3;  
Tents: 3;  
Sleighs: 3;  
Articles of clothing: over 200;  
Harpoons: about 35;  
Accessories for hunting, fishing, etc.: about 650;  
Implements for work (men's tools): 150;  
Household and cooking accessories (women): about 250;  
Dolls, toys, games: about 300.

In addition:

A very large collection of native drawings;  
A collection of driftwood (made by Dr. Gessain).

*Recording discs* (electrical apparatus for recording by microphone): about 60 discs (diameter, 10 inches), two sides, including a total of about 250 songs, and a record of a tornidek séance, an angakok religious ceremony.

*Investigation of the following:*

About 800 songs (comic-songs, love-songs, drum-contests, mime, etc.).

Technique of carpentry, preparation of skins, construction of huts, tents, kayaks, ouniaks, etc.

Methods of hunting and fishing, etc.

Different articles of food and their preparation (Dr. R. Gessain).

Children's and adults' games.

Education and practice of angakoks.

Religious practices.

The vocabulary of different arts and crafts.

The secret vocabulary of the angakoks.

Geographical vocabulary, and nomenclature of the places mentioned. (M. Pérez and P.-E. Victor.)

Anatomical vocabulary (Dr. R. Gessain).

Zoological and botanical (Dr. R. Gessain).

Stories and autobiographies committed to writing by a certain number of native informants.

Demography (Dr. Gessain).

Measurement of houses, oumiaks, kayaks, etc. (M. Pérez and F. Matter.)

Numbers of inhabitants per hut. (Dr. Gessain and P.-E. Victor.)

Amongst these investigations, a few of them which were particularly long and difficult could not be pursued to a definite conclusion. But they continue nevertheless to provide a valuable basis for future work which we hope to complete with success.

*Ethnographical photographs:* about 3,000 photographs showing various phases of different arts and crafts, and aspects of native life (made by the four members of the Expedition).

*Cinematograph film* (F. Matter-Steveniers).

#### ANTHROPOLOGY AND PHYSIOLOGY

(Dr. R. Gessain, in charge of this section)

##### *Anthropology:*

*Measurements:* About 820 persons examined out of a total population of 875 (on the 1st January, 1935), with an average of 30 measurements for each individual. (Dr. Gessain assisted by P.-E. Victor.)

*Specimens of hair:* About 500 specimens of the hair of the head and other parts of the body.

*Skeletons:* 25 skulls or skull-caps (calva), and a large number of bones (long bones and pelvis).

*Anthropological photographs:* about 1,500.

##### *Physiology:*

*Basal metabolism:* Over 80 tests made on adults, and diagrammatically recorded by Benedict apparatus.

*Blood tests:* About 500, taken in groups with the family as the unit, and constituting material for notes on heredity.

*Sedimentations:* About 290 blood sedimentations, for the majority of which a reading of as long as 24 hours was allowed.

*Observation* of temperature, reaction to stimuli, etc.

*Investigation of:*

Puberty (age and modality of menstruation).

Confinements.

Percentage of twin births.

Teething of infants, with study of dental growth.

Teeth of adults (setting, decay, etc.).

Hygiene of dwellings.

*Radioscopic examinations* of a large number of persons, with special reference to bone formation and pulmonary conditions.

*Pathology:*

*Clinical observations* taken both at the infirmary in the Danish colony and in the various settlements visited.

*Bacteriological examinations* undertaken with a view to discovering the origin of a pulmonary disease prevalent among the natives.

*Tuberculin:* 192 tests made on adults and children.

*Radiography:* About 30 plates taken from cases of pulmonary or bone diseases.

GEOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY, METEOROLOGY

(Michel Pérez, in charge of this section)

*Geography:*

*Revision of the map* of the district lying within latitude and longitude  $65^{\circ}25'$  N. and  $66^{\circ}30'$  N., and  $34^{\circ}25'$  W. and  $39^{\circ}40'$  W., carried out during the journey over it. Certain corrections made.

*Exploration* of the unknown coastal and mountainous region lying between  $34^{\circ}41'$  W. and  $36^{\circ}15'$  W. (M. Pérez and F. Matter.)

*Information:* Photographs and panoramic views of the whole district traversed; sketches of the shores of the two principal fjords of Sermilik and Angmagssalik. (P. Victor.)

*Map* of sleigh tracks.

*Physical Geography and Geology:*

Observations taken of these, including glacial conditions.

*Collections:* Mineralogical specimens from the whole region, and a thousand photographs of various aspects of physical geography.

*Meteorology:**Observations taken:*

Barometrical,  
Thermometrical,  
Anemometrical,  
Cloud formations,  
Precipitation,  
Aurorae boreales.

Comparison of observations taken at the base camp with those taken in the various settlements.

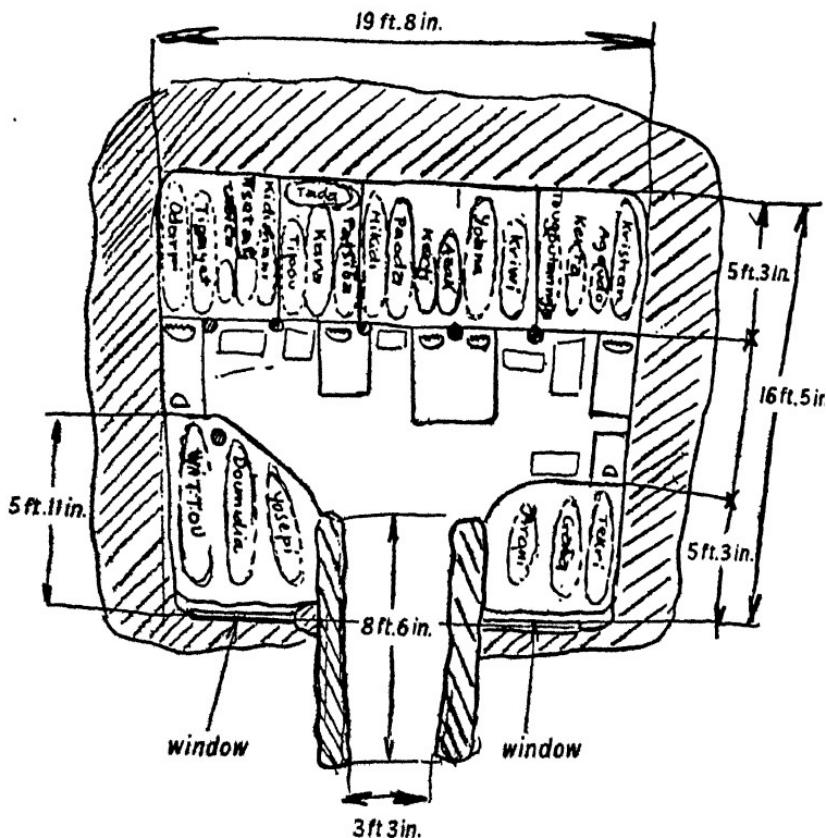
*Soundings:* A plummet line fixed at the entrance of the bay at Tassisusak.

*Local terminology:* Place names of the district catalogued in accordance with information supplied by the inhabitants, and the geographical vocabulary. (P. Victor and M. Pérez.)

*Reykjavik (Iceland), September 1935.*



THE OCCUPANTS OF THE HUT AT KANGERD-  
LUGSSUATSIAQ, AUGUST 1936 TO AUGUST 1937



## NOTES ON THE OCCUPANTS OF THE HUT

YOANNA. An old woman of uncertain age, but somewhere in the neighbourhood of sixty (the Eskimo are old at fifty). Grandmother to the whole hut. A fund of good stories, and remembered the time previous to the discovery of the Eskimo. She ate human flesh during a famine. She died in October 1936.

KRIWI. Her daughter of fifteen. Pretty and inclined to be a little flirtatious.

KRISTIAN (tougartougou, i.e. he who stirs in his sleep). A man of thirty-three. Yoanna's son-in-law. Excellent hunter. Very hard-working and clever, and very intelligent. He was my best friend, and it was thanks to him that I never felt depressed during the whole year I was there. His first wife, Tomazina, was Yoanna's eldest daughter. She died in August 1936. He became engaged to Doumidia in February 1937.

His children were:

GABA, a boy of fifteen.

TOUGOUTANNGA, a girl of twelve.

ARONI, a boy of nine.

KERTA, a little girl of five.

AGOUDO, a little girl of three.

MIKIDI. A man of thirty. Yoanna's son-in-law and Paoda's husband. A good hunter, rather lazy but a thoroughly good sort.

PAODA. A woman of twenty-five. Yoanna's daughter and Mikidi's wife. Very reserved; I would even call her distinguished.

Their children were:

AZAK, a boy of six.

KERTI, a little boy of three, horribly given to snivelling and whining.

MIKADI, a boy born in February 1937.

ODARPI. A man of forty. Tigayet's husband. A very good hunter and an excellent worker with his hands.

TIGAYET. A woman of twenty-five. Odarpi's wife and a niece of Yoanna's. An unpleasant mixture of smiles and ill temper, and a monument of selfishness.

Their children were:

PATSIBA, a girl of seven, completely neglected by Tigayet, and adopted by Kara.

KIDIMANNI, a girl of five, who had already acquired airs and graces.

TSETAY, a little girl of three, treated like a boy.

TABITA, a baby girl of a year old, much given to squalling.

KARA (oupadaranguitsek, i.e. she who has no thighs). A woman of forty-five, Odarpi's sister. Doumidia's mother, and my adopted mother. A heart of gold. She never smiled but would burst out into noisy laughter. It was she who cut up the seals which I brought back, distributed the portions, prepared the skins, etc. Always ready to take on the most unpleasant jobs. Hopelessly untidy.

DOUMIDIA (poutsiak, i.e. the little bag). Kara's daughter, nineteen years old. Perfectly charming. A heart of gold, like her mother's. Became engaged to Kristian in February 1937.

TEKRI. A man of twenty-eight. Brother of Kara and Odarpi. Both his legs were paralysed, as a result of which he had become clever at women's tasks. Very intelligent, and a really good sort.

TIPOU, also known as Tipoungouyouk. A girl of ten, a daughter of Odarpi's by his first marriage. Tigayet detested her, and she had been adopted by Kara. She became my adopted daughter. A charming child.

YOSEPI. A boy of sixteen. An orphan. Nephew of Kara and Odarpi, and brother of Tada and Ogui. His mother had

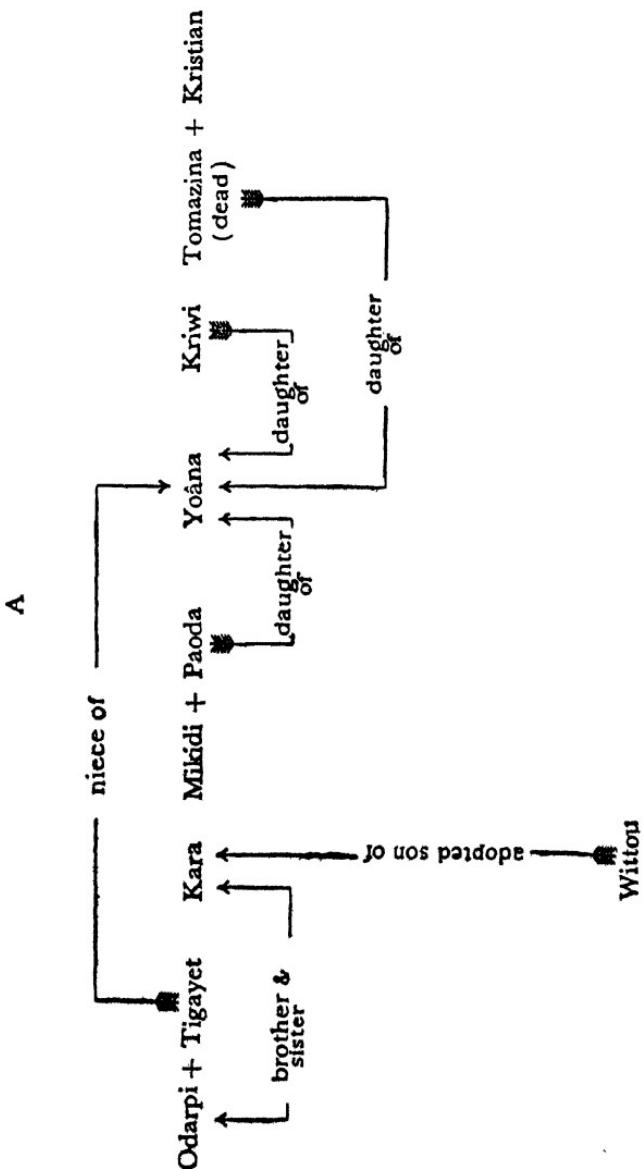
put out one of his eyes whilst sewing, when he was five years old. He was already a good hunter, and was a good boy.

TADA, also called Tadagayik. A girl of ten, and an orphan. Niece of Kara and Odarpi, and sister of Yosepi and Ogui. Badly treated by Tigayet, and had been adopted by Kara. Always rather shy.

OGUI. A boy of eight, and an orphan. Nephew of Kara and Odarpi, and brother of Yosepi and Tada. Had been adopted by Kara. Always went about naked both in summer and winter. A fine little fellow.

PAUL-EMILE VICTOR. A man of twenty-nine. Eskimo name: 'Wittou', and called also 'Sanimougatak', 'the broad man' (because of his broad shoulders perhaps). The author of this book.

DIAGRAM SHOWING THE DEGREES OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VARIOUS FAMILY GROUPS IN  
THE HUT (KANGERDLUGSSUATSIAQ, 1936-7)





## THE DOGS

*(Those which I had as an outcome of my first winter sojourn, 1934-5. They were then presented to us by the English explorer, Martin Lindsay.)*

OUKIOK, i.e. winter. Seven years old. Team leader. Tawny coat. Masterful disposition and well suited to his work. Rather old but still obedient. He had lost both ears during the course of various fights, and bore a number of scars, remnants of bites, on his muzzle. His upper jaw had been smashed in an epic contest with his son Pitermassi (who is now in France). I was obliged to put him down when I left in August 1937, on account of his age.

ARNATAYIK, i.e. the woman with many husbands. Five years old. Tawny coat. Feminine and coquettish. An excellent mother. Protested whenever she saw the whip raised. She would stir up the dogs to fight each other and then watch them with evident satisfaction.

KRANORSOUAK, i.e. the big black dog. Four years old. Black, with two white points over the eyes. A strong, hefty dog but objected to being fussed. He used to suffer tortures whenever he lost sight of me; he slept at my feet or at the entrance to my tent. In spite of all my efforts to save him, he died in November 1936 as the result of bites in the stomach.

TsOUKOUDAYIK, i.e. the chocolate-coloured dog. Four years old. Red in winter and chocolate brown in summer. Timid and given to whining, but a very good sleigh dog. He died of a perforated stomach in the winter of 1936.

SINCARNAK. Four years old. Tawny coat. He had become timid as the result of ill-treatment by an Eskimo for a whole year. He died of some illness in the autumn of 1936.

The dogs mentioned below were also with me for our crossing of the Inlandsis in 1936:

KRENERAK, i.e. the black dog. Three years old. Entirely black, and of very distinguished appearance. He carried his head splendidly. He hanged himself at the end of his chain while attempting to steal salmon in process of drying. (October 1936.)

KROASERODIDIK, i.e. the dog who wears a collar. Two years old. Black with white collar. The only one of my dogs who appeared to understand French. I had to shoot him with my revolver in the autumn of 1936, when he was ill.

ANGUINEK, i.e. the large dog. Two years old. Black with white collar. Notwithstanding his height and broad chest, his manners were those of a young puppy. He was killed by two dogs belonging to my Eskimo companion Kristian, whilst in a weakened state through illness. (Autumn of 1936.)

ATLALIK, i.e. the spotted dog. Eighteen months old. Light grey with dark grey spots. A very good sleigh dog, full of life and go. High-spirited and playful. I was obliged to put him down on account of illness, in the autumn of 1936.

INERO, i.e. the petted dog. Eighteen months old. Yellow coat. During the crossing, he acquired the bad habit of taking up a position completely to the left of the sleigh, that being farthest away from the whip. . . .

ARNATAK, i.e. the lonely woman. Four years old. Black and white. Mother of the last five dogs mentioned. She was rather plebeian, and inclined to be lazy. But her affection for myself was touching.

The three following came from other families which were broken up during the crossing:

TIORALAK, i.e. the sparrow of the snows. Eighteen months old. Tawny coat. My best dog, and became the leader of my final team. He reminded one of a spoilt child, and was inclined to be masterful. A very good bear hunter. Son of Singarnangwak, the dog who is at the present time in France.

MELDORF, i.e. the entirely black dog. Enormous paws. He always looked rather half-witted, and frightened. Son of the next mentioned.

ADERANGUI, i.e. the woman without a name. Entirely black. She always had something in her mouth when she came up to me, this being by way of flirtation.

The following were new dogs, which I had trained myself:

KRIVIOK, 18 months old, and named after one of Knud Rasmussen's ships. Light grey coat. Daughter of Arnatayik, and my best bitch. Invariably gay and cheerful, and full of airs and graces. A very good hunter of bears, and always willing and good-tempered.

WAPS, her sister. Eighteen months old. So intelligent that she could idle without appearing to do so. A good bear hunter.

NEVIARTOK, i.e. the shopkeeper. One year old. Yellow coat. Son of Arnatayik. He had the character of a born leader; he licked the wounds of those he had worsted in battle.

KRATOUNARAYIK, i.e. the little Kratouna. Tawny coat. Brother of the last mentioned, and taller than he but not so fierce and more refined.

NEVIARTSIK, i.e. the young girl. Sister of the two last mentioned. Tawny coat. She and her mother Arnatayik were inseparable, and they were always to be seen trotting along side by side whenever they were free, and were harnessed alongside each other with the sleigh. They had sworn an oath of mutual friendship. I saw Arnatayik bare her teeth at her on one occasion only; the day on which she had given birth to four puppies.

KRADIBAZOK, i.e. the painter. Sister of the last mentioned. One year old. Grey coat. When harnessed to the sleigh, she simply pulled for the sheer pleasure of pulling, and nothing else would distract her attention from this. A good bear hunter.

ITLOUWINAK, i.e. the man with uneven sides to his face. Born in June 1936. Grey coat. Son of Kiviok. He took after his mother; from the very first day he was put in harness he behaved like an old dog. Gaunt and ungainly, and an affectionate nature.

TIMERTSIT AND EKRIDI. Two sisters born in July 1936, on the very day of our 'return to the country of mankind', at the completion of our crossing of the Inlandsis. Daughters of Singarnangwak, who is now in France. Named after two imaginary species of inhabitants of the great ice desert. They were like my own children, always crowding round my legs, and each one sleeping on one of my feet.

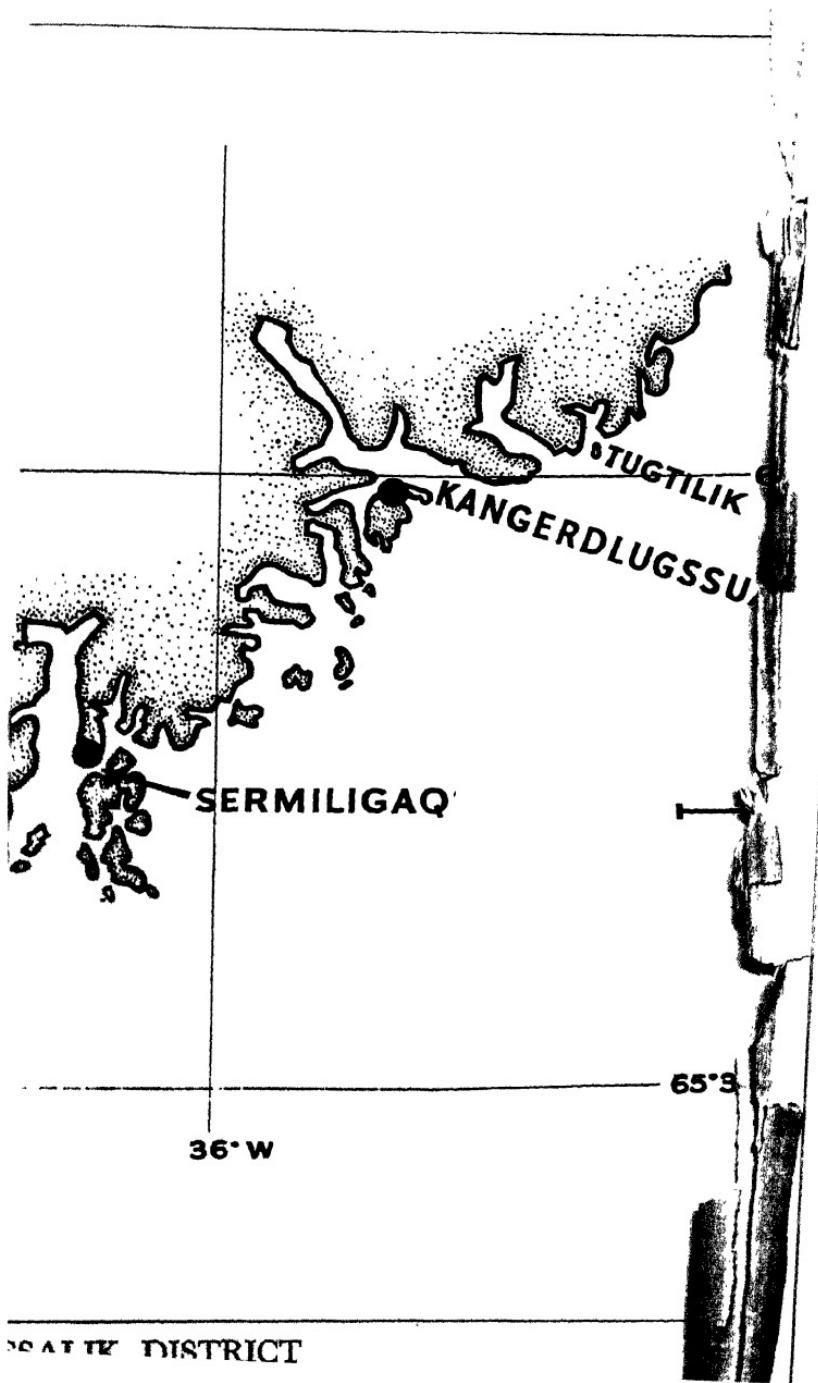
And a few others, all of them puppies born during the course of my stay:

KRENERAK	} Sons of Waps, born in October 1937.
TOYOUK	
KRANERSOUAK	
KROASERODIDIK	
SINGARNANGOUYOUK	Children of Aderangui, born in April
NOUNGADIK	1937.
ANGUINEK	
KROUZOROUT.	Daughter of Kiviok, born in April 1937.
FIFILLE	
IDIMARIT	Children of Arnatayik, born in April 1937.
APADARTOK	
SANIMOUGATAK	
TSATOK	
KRABIARPIK	Children of Timertsit, born in June 1937.
SARA	
KAMA	

And lastly, two odd ones purchased with beads during expeditions.

NOUYATSOKE, i.e. the dog with long hair. Red coat. Acquired in March 1937. For the first few days he was always trying to bite me, after which he became one of my cleverest and most affectionate dogs.

OUYARA, i.e. the louse. A little white bitch. Acquired in





March 1937. Her temper was always perfect and she pulled like a little demon.

Total - 40 dogs and puppies.

7 died at the beginning of the year.

16 were too young to be of any real use for expeditions.

12 (the best) were utilised by myself (10 for the sleigh,  
2 in reserve).

5 full-grown dogs were lent to my Eskimo companions.

At my departure in August 1937, these dogs were distributed amongst my Eskimo companions; the best dogs, and those which I valued most highly, being given to my friends Kristian and Doumidia.

GLOSSARY OF WORDS OF WHICH OCCASIONAL  
USE IS MADE IN THE TEXT

A

*Amartsiwit.* A hole made in the ice for shark fishing.

*Angakok* (plur. *angakout*). Sorcerer, wizard.

*Anorak.* A kind of reefer jacket, with or without hood.

*Arniwak.* A charm, mascot.

E

*Ekridek* (plur. *ekridi*). A legendary being inhabiting the Inlandsis, which moves by crawling on all fours.

I

*Idiwitsi.* A seal which has been kept beneath stones and is eaten raw and in a high condition.

*Idizitsek* (plur. *idizitsit*). A magician.

K

*Kamik.* Sealskin top-boots.

*Kringaranguitsek* (plur. *Kringaranguitsit*). A legendary being which lives underground and has no nose.

*Kratouna.* A white man.

*Kra.* Sealskin on which the Eskimo sleep.

*Kwenni.* Angelica.

O

*Ounakrit* (plur. *ounakrit*). Oil lamp.

*Oumiak.* A large boat, rowed by the women.

## P

*Pikiwa.* A chignon peculiar to the Eskimo women, and worn on the top of the head.

*Pouyak.* A glutinous substance obtained by slow melting of fat in the sun.

*Pougouket.* Bilberries.

## T

*Toupidek.* A monstrous being created by the angakout.

*Tornidek.* A séance of witchcraft.

*Timertsit.* A legendary being; a giant living on the Inlandsis.

*Toumara.* Box, chest, packing-case.

## NOTE ON THE ESKIMO LANGUAGE

The Eskimo language, with the exception of Chinese, is perhaps the most complicated language in the world.

Peary says that it is one of the poorest, containing about 400 words only.

W. Stefanson maintains that it is one of the richest, with about 14,000 words.

We shall show that both are right.

The language of the Eskimo of Angmagssalik forms part of a group of Eskimo languages which extends over the whole of the Arctic regions of America, from Greenland to the Behring Straits.

These languages belong to the group of *agglutinative* or synthetic languages (French, English, German, etc., are *constructive* or analytical. Chinese is a *tonal* language in which the same syllable differently 'sung' has different meanings.)

The Eskimo language is composed of a certain number of roots of which the meaning may be modified by a number of suffixes which have only to be added to them.

*Example* (taken from the language of the Eskimo of Angmagssalik):

Root <i>tigui</i>	- root 'to arrive'.
<i>tiguipok</i>	- he arrives.
<i>tiguipa</i>	- he comes to him.
<i>tiguipara</i>	- I come to him.
<i>tiguipakit</i>	- I come to you.
<i>tgui padit</i>	- he comes to you. etc.
<i>tiguikripa</i>	- he comes again to him.
<i>kri</i>	- suffix 'again'.
<i>tiguikritsarpa</i>	- he comes right up to him.
<i>kritsa</i>	- suffix 'completely', 'entirely'.
<i>tiguikrikritsarpa</i>	- he comes again right up to him. etc.

Finally, one may arrive at the construction of the following

word (grammatically correct but, as will be easily understood, seldom used).

tiguikrikrisartsimarmertsimaroartarpangok - he says that he has often had occasion, lately, to come right up to him. . . .

If Peary took into account the number of roots, only, the reader will understand, from the above, his having found the Eskimo language a poor one. Stefanson would seem to have considered all the possible combinations.







